

OUR NAVAL HEROES



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OUR NAVAL HEROES

19804*

EDITED BY

G. E. MARINDIN, M.A.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

ADMIRAL LORD CHARLES BERESFORD, R.N.

"Admirals all, for England's sake,
Honour be yours and fame!
And honour, as long as waves shall break,
To Nelson's peerless name."

WITH PORTRAITS

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INTRODUCTION.

A VERY great compliment has been paid me by the publishers of this most interesting volume in asking me to write the preface. Fortunately for the reader, the writers of the various biographies, who are in most cases descendants of the heroes they write about, are possessed of more literary skill and talent than a seaman like myself, while the honour of the Navy from a literary point of view is well maintained by Admiral Sir R. Vesey Hamilton, the late Vice-Admiral P. H. Colomb, and Commander Troubridge. The list of Naval Heroes here passed in rapid but instructive review, embraces all the best, and includes some of the least known, names in the history of the British Navy, from the time of Edward III., in the fourteenth century, down to Nelson, Troubridge, and others, who lived and died in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Since the earlier days of this century so near its close, the British Empire has enjoyed profound peace

so far as an invasion of our shores is concerned. Wars have come and gone, but except for those who have had relatives at the front, the British people have hardly realised the horrors of war, and this immunity from the most terrible scourge of any nation is due wholly and entirely to the deeds of Naval Heroes like those depicted in the following pages. Their skill, courage, brilliancy of conception, quickness in execution, and general readiness for any emergency, obtained for us that prestige, which, in the face of Continental jealousies and widespread envy of our wealth and prosperity, has preserved peace to our shores and plenty in our homes.

A country cannot, however, live for ever on its ancient prestige. The lapse of years has made other nations forget our victories in the past, the high courage, resolute daring, and superb strategy of our Naval Heroes. A strong navy, of overwhelming force, is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the Empire; and our duty to the country, ourselves, as well as to our bygone Naval Heroes, is to see that we worthily maintain our position as the First Naval Power of the world. Never could those old heroes have looked upon our efforts with greater satisfaction than at the close of the nineteenth century; but the lesson which such a book as this should teach is, that we must not sit down when we have made

things secure, and say our task is completed. There is no sinking fund or depreciation account for the Royal Navy, and as a business nation we must make up our minds that, having restored the Navy to a condition equal to its needs, we must keep it thoroughly organised and efficient in all details. If these old heroes could give us advice, they would tell us not to let the millions we have spent be wasted by again allowing the fleet to become obsolete, weak, and unprepared. Drake would warn us how the parsimony of Queen Bess nearly cost us our life as a nation. We have no right to depend upon men of the same stamp as Pellew (Lord Exmouth), Drake, the Hood family, Howe, St. Vincent, Nelson, and the other great leaders here mentioned, being always able to pull us out of our difficulties. The Naval Heroes of the past would have expected the men of the present to play their part in insisting on the maintenance of an efficient fleet as the strongest bulwark for our gigantic Empire.

One of the principal charms of this book is the fact that it rescues from obscurity names of men like Commodore Watson, and does justice to men like Lord Torrington. If it but stirs up the minds and hearts of one in every ten readers to realise the lesson such lives should teach us, then, I venture to

think, the aim of the authors and publishers will have been achieved. The red, white, and blue of Britain's flag is to be seen on every sea and in every corner of the earth, and wherever it goes it carries with it that same liberty, justice, and love of truth, that same smartness and chivalrous pluck which are the distinguishing characteristics of our Naval Heroes, the Empire-builders of the past.

CHARLES BERESFORD.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.



IN editing this book I have interfered as little as possible with the articles originally published by their authors in the *United Service Magazine*. It has been necessary, in throwing these articles together, to add a few lines here and there for the purpose of explaining the historical situation, and to supply notes, chiefly cross-references, where allusion is made to events which are more fully described in other parts of the book, but also in a few cases giving the opinions of other authorities, as for instance in the account of the tactics at Trafalgar. I have made, but rarely, some omissions ; and I have in a few cases added further details, for instance, in the accounts of the battles of Quiberon and the Nile, which the authors were probably precluded from giving by the limits of space in the Magazine.

G. E. MARINDIN.

November, 1900.

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EDWARD III.

From a Painting in Windsor Castle.

OUR NAVAL HEROES.



I.

KING EDWARD III.

BY HONOURABLE ALEXANDER NELSON HOOD.

"I, EDWARD, by the Grace of God King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine, do hereby become thy man, to hold the Duchy of Guienne as Duke thereof, and the Earldom of Ponthieu and Montreuil as Earl thereof, and as Peer of France, in like manner as my predecessors did homage for the said Duchy and Earldom to thy predecessors."

In those words of King Edward III. we may find a key to the ruling principle of his life. They were spoken by him in the Cathedral of Amiens, where, with a gorgeous following of knights, and arrayed in a royal robe of crimson velvet with a train on which were embroidered the leopards of England, with his crown on his head and golden spurs on his heels, he appeared before King Philip of France, who, as feudal suzerain of the English fiefs in France, claimed personal homage of Edward. Philip, "seated on his throne, in a blue velvet robe of state, sprinkled with golden *fleurs-de-lys*, his crown on his head, and his sceptre in his hand, and surrounded by a brilliant assemblage of reigning kings and sovereign princes, his feudatories, and all the great nobles of his realm, looked for a more submissive form of acknowledgment of his rights" (as was customary for one swearing fealty), and demanded it. But Edward declined "to put off

the crown and lay aside the sword" to please the King of France. Nor was Edward's manner of doing homage dictated by love of display or bombast. Even in those early days of his life—he was only sixteen years of age—he was determined to sustain the honour of his country fearlessly as a king, and maintain it resolutely as a chivalrous knight should do.

A memoir of King Edward III. must necessarily be an abridged chapter of the history of England of that time, because the principal events of the reign reflect the character of the monarch.

Born at Windsor Castle in 1312, the future king had a sad childhood. Separated from his father, Edward II., and put at the head of a party which sought to make him king during his father's lifetime, he ascended the throne at the age of fourteen. Proclaimed king on the 29th January, 1327, and crowned on the 1st February, he was also admitted, on the same day, to knighthood, "an order to which, in those days, even kings were proud to belong." But it was not until 1330 that Edward finally succeeded in freeing himself from the sinister influences which surrounded him, and, throwing off the yoke imposed by the Queen Mother and the worthless Mortimer, who, having confessed that he was the murderer of Edward II., rightly ended his days at "The Elms" (afterwards called Tyburn) in that year.

On the 24th January, 1328, the king had been married at York to Philippa, daughter of Count William of Hainault, the bridegroom being between fifteen and sixteen, and the bride only fourteen years of age. At the birth of his son and heir in June, 1330, the king was yet a boy.

Though it is the avowed intention of this memoir to represent Edward III. as one of our great Naval Heroes—a distinction which his name undoubtedly deserves—the military campaigns of the king and his armies seem to demand attention also, more especially as they were the cause of those naval exploits which earned him the title of the "King of the Sea." The wars with Scotland, France, and Spain, which were carried on almost without intermission during the whole course of the reign, therefore claim attention first. Those wars, which

were a continuation of more ancient quarrels, began very early in the king's life, and the first call to arms came to Edward from Scotland, whence, in 1327, Robert Bruce sent a defiant message, saying that he would "enter England and burn it as he had done before the battle of Bannockburn." The Scots, true to their word, entered England with 24,000 men under the Earl of Murray and Sir James Douglas (Bruce himself being too ill with leprosy to lead them), ravaging the county of Cumberland, and engaging in their usual tactics of "doing all the mischief they could, moving rapidly from place to place, and never risking a collision with the main body of the enemy." Edward, going in pursuit in person, and not finding his opponents, offered a substantial reward to any one who would tell him their position. When he had crossed the Tyne, news was brought to him that the Scots were "some three leagues away on a hill sloping down to the right bank of the Wear. At daybreak Edward drew out his army 'in a fair meadow to refresh themselves' before the march, and himself withdrew to a neighbouring abbey to confess and receive absolution before the battle." The English advanced and came in sight of the enemy; and Edward—in the spirit of chivalry of the time—sent a herald to say that if the Scots wanted to fight he would retire far enough from the position which he had taken up in order that they might marshal their array. But though the Scottish leaders sent back a defiant answer, they knew that it would go hard with them if they were intercepted by the enemy, so they decamped during the night, and moved further up the river. The English followed, and the two armies remained facing each other for a fortnight, the Scots feeling quite at home—being well accustomed to such irregular warfare—the English suffering much privation. "From every midnight till morning the former kept up such a noise with perpetual and universal shoutings and cries and winding of horns most dismally, that it seemed as if all the devils had come to carry them off. On one of those nights, Douglas planned and all but carried out an adventure, the wild and successful audacity of which recalls the midnight raid of Gideon on the host of the Midianites.

Putting himself at the head of 200 men, he charged suddenly into the midst of the sleeping English camp, shouting, 'A Douglas! a Douglas! Die, ye English thieves!' Three hundred men were slaughtered half asleep, and Douglas himself made straight for the tent of the young king, the ropes of which he cut with his own sword before he galloped off safe with most of his men in the darkness and confusion." Not intending to risk a battle, the Scots crossed the river in the middle of the night, and when Edward heard of their departure they were already many leagues away on the road to Scotland. Pursuit was hopeless; and finally a treaty of peace was signed on the 24th April, 1328, and the first campaign came to an end. The conditions of that treaty were advantageous to Scotland; but Robert Bruce thought it inexpedient to fulfil all his share of the bargain. When he died in 1329, and was succeeded by his son David, a child of seven years old, Edward being unwilling to break the peace, the English barons of the north took the quarrel into their own hands, and making common cause with Balliol, son of the ex-king of Scotland and an aspirant to the throne, took ship with 3300 men for Kinghorn in Fife, where they successfully landed after a brief resistance, and marching westward by Dunfermline, underneath Perth, established themselves in a strong position by the river Earn. The Earl of Mar, the Regent, marched against them with 40,000 men, being joined by the Earl of March with an army scarcely inferior in number. The combined forces of Balliol and the English attacked the "scattered, over-secure, and ill-sentinelled camp of the enemy with such a sudden and furious onslaught that the huge Scottish army broke up into a panic-stricken and disorganised crowd, and were slaughtered like sheep, the number of the slain four times exceeding that of the whole of Balliol's army, which escaped with the loss of thirty men."

Such was the Battle of Dupplin Moor, fought on the 12th August, 1332. Scotland was thus subdued, and Balliol crowned at Scone, at the same time offering to hold the country for the King of England "as his man, doing homage for it as an English fief." Edward, as was his custom in

matters of less importance than the present one, consulted his Parliament, and accepted the offer ; but before advantage could be taken of it Balliol, lying at Annan and not suspecting any danger, was attacked by the followers of the young Bruce, and barely escaped with his life across the border. The inroads of the Scots continuing, Edward determined to invade Scotland, and marched on Berwick-on-Tweed, which he invested. Sir Archibald Douglas—the Regent in Bruce's name—appeared before the town with an army outnumbering the English, and attacked the strong position taken up by Edward on Halidon Hill. The Scots were defeated after a great fight ; and “such bloody carnage ensued and so many knights and nobles fell that it was the saying of the day that the Scotch wars were over at last, for there was not a man left in Scotland who had skill enough to muster an army or lead it against the enemy.” Berwick surrendered, and became part of the kingdom of England ; in fact, was the only “territorial trophy of Edward's Scottish victories which was never subsequently lost. It was therefore invested with peculiar interest and importance as representing the English claims to the sovereignty of Scotland.”

Balliol was now acknowledged by the Scotch Parliament as king ; and Dunbar, Roxburgh, Edinburgh, and the whole kingdom south of the Forth were ceded to the English crown. But the Scots never accepted Balliol's rule nor England's dominion ; and though Edward made many excursions in the hope of confirming his power, the year 1335 found him further than ever from the conquest of Scottish soil. The war had assumed a chronic character. In 1336 Edward had left the command to others, Balliol being sent to defend the Marches ; but the English were being constantly worsted in the struggle, and were driven out of the fortresses of Dunbar, Perth, and Stirling, in which they had taken refuge. In 1340 Edinburgh was also recaptured by the aid of the French, who had espoused Bruce's cause ; and later on, in 1346, during Edward's absence in France, they invaded England, believing that “England was ‘bare of fighting men,’ and that none but ‘cowardly clerks and mean mechanics’ stood between them

and a march to London, these restless and independent spirits determined not to throw away a chance of doing mischief." Young King David Bruce marched into Cumberland with 30,000 cavalry, and was opposed by an army levied by Prince Lionel, whom Edward had left as guardian of the realm. The two armies met at Neville's Cross, where the English won a complete victory. David himself was taken after a gallant resistance, and was imprisoned in the Tower of London.

In 1355 King Edward had to return hurriedly from France to repel a new inroad of the Scotch—an inroad so fiercely avenged in the opening of the following year by the havoc and destruction of the Lothians that this fatal February was talked of for long years as the "Burnt Candlemas." Berwick, which was threatened, was relieved; but at Edinburgh provisions fell short and a disastrous retreat ensued, for "the Scots swarmed in every thicket the English passed, and hovered on their rear, cutting off the stragglers and wounded as they fell behind." In 1357 negotiations were renewed, and soon afterwards King David was released.

This may be stated as a short and imperfect *résumé* of the war with Scotland, in which great renown was added to Edward's military prowess; but it is doubtful whether the permanent territorial gain was at all proportionate to the expenditure of money and loss of men during the war.

The war with France may now be spoken of. King Charles IV., surnamed the Fair, dying without male heirs, Edward claimed the throne through his mother, Isabella, daughter of King Philip IV. and sister of Charles, on the ground that he was the "nearest male in blood" to the deceased sovereign. Edward's claim was supported by his Parliament; but the "twelve barons of France, acting as the highest authority of the kingdom during an interregnum, had decided and declared that the crown devolved upon Philip of Valois, as the first cousin of the late king." It was not until later that Edward did more than place on record his claim, making meanwhile secret preparation for enforcing it, for, as already stated, we find him at Amiens doing homage for Guienne; and we are told that he left France not only on

terms of friendship with the king, but delighted with his visit to France. But the feelings between the two countries soon became embittered by the help that France continuously gave to Scotland, and the policy of Philip, which was to annex to himself all the great fiefs of the French crown. No doubt Edward saw through that policy, and having grave interests at stake in Guienne and elsewhere in France, he was driven to take measures for their protection. In 1336 the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands were attacked and English commerce harassed by French cruisers; but yet Edward persevered in his endeavours to maintain peace. It was not until 1337 that the first blow was struck in the war that was to follow, and that, not against the French king directly, but against the Count of Flanders, who, expelled from his country by his subjects, had become the ally of France.

The Flemings were at war with France, and an alliance was entered into with them by Edward; for, owing to the important position which they held as a secondary power in Europe, as well as for mercantile reasons, they seemed to offer him the advantages which he sought. It was not until the 22nd July, 1338, that King Edward, delayed by a visit of two emissaries of the pope, who were sent over to try and dissuade him from the war, set foot "in anger" on the Continent. He sailed from the Orwell with 200 ships, leaving Prince Edward, then a boy of eight years old, and recently created Duke of Cornwall, as Warden of the Realm during his absence.

Delayed again by his negotiations with the Empire and others whose co-operation he wished to secure, Edward, "having first, according to feudal custom, formally defied" King Philip, in September, 1339, opened the campaign by marching with his allies upon Cambrai with an army of about 40,000 men. That city was strongly defended, and in order not to lose time the siege was raised and the immediate invasion of France commenced. Philip marched to meet him, and the chroniclers of the time have much to say on the magnificence of the French array, supported by the Kings of Bohemia and Scotland, princes and nobles, which took up a position at Vironfosse. There Edward sent a herald to demand

a battle ; and on the morning of the day appointed for the fray both kings "heard Mass each among his own people at his own quarters, and many took the Sacrament and confessed themselves." The two kings drew up their order of battle, and all was ready for the fight, at all events on the English side, when, strange as it may seem, Philip, at the last moment having apparently more faith in the predictions of astrologers than in the bravery of his troops, declined an engagement and marched away to Paris. In a letter to his son King Edward says that on the day after that fixed for the battle Philip had taken up a stronger position, and "so hastily that 1000 of his horsemen had sunk into a marsh ; and that on the day following the allies, ascertaining that the French were in retreat, declared they would stay no longer," thus following the example of the Counts of Hainault and Namur, who had already left him. Edward "had no choice but to retire upon Brussels," and soon after sailed for England.

It was at this time that the French *fleur-de-lys* was quartered with the English leopards, and the motto *Dieu et mon Droit* adopted for the Royal Arms of England.

In June, 1340, King Edward returned to carry on the siege of Tournai, fighting the great sea-fight of Sluys on his way, a description of which is reserved until the naval exploits of the king are recounted.

Tournai, invested by over 100,000 troops, of whom 40,000 were Flemish under Van Artevelde, was, however, not destined to fall. Defended gallantly by 30,000 men, the city survived the threatened subjugation by famine. Edward, whether tired out by waiting, or yielding to the prayers of Jane, Countess Dowager of Hainault, mother of Queen Philippa and sister of the Queen of France (who came out of the convent in which she had been since her husband's death to the English camp, and on her knees besought Edward to raise the siege); or whether because his presence was again required elsewhere, since he had been informed that the French had occupied a greater part of Guienne,—at all events, abandoned the siege, and Tournai was saved. It is true that King Philip appeared

with a large army to succour the beleaguered city, but his presence was of no avail, "he being determined to renew his policy of exhausting the resources and the patience of his rival by a masterly inactivity and avoidance of battle." Edward, "chafing at delay," wrote a letter "highly characteristic of the chivalric customs and modes of thought then dominant in Europe," dating it "the first year of our reign over France, and the fourteenth over England," and proposed to Philip to fight at a given time and place, "either in single combat, or each at the head of his army." Philip answered his challenge discourteously, saying, "Since you, in breach of your liege homage and fealty, have entered our territory, and done great damage to our realm, we intend to chase you out of it when we think proper." The King of France, however, did not think it "proper" on this occasion either to attempt to "chase" the English out, or to risk a battle, but again retreated. Edward, withdrawing "sullenly and reluctantly" from before Tournai, crossed the Channel once more, and sailing up the Thames, landed unannounced under the Tower of London.

In 1342 Edward espoused the cause of De Montfort of Brittany, who, quarrelling with the French king over the possession of that duchy, betook himself to Windsor to offer to do Edward liege homage in return for assistance. Of the invasion of Brittany by the French under Charles de Blois; of the capture of Nantes and of De Montfort himself; of the noble defence of Hennebon by De Montfort's wife, Jeanne—called *Cœur de Lion* by Froissart—(who, "clad in armour, rode from post to post, from street to street, and made her ladies pick up the paving-stones and carry them to the ramparts, from whence they could be launched, along with lighted brands and quicklime, on the heads of the assailants; and who sallied forth with 200 men, burnt the enemy's tents and baggage, and being cut off, rode for life to a neighbouring castle, whence issuing she fought her way through the French lines to Hennebon"); of the relief of the place by an English expedition under Sir Walter Manny; of the raising of the siege by Charles of Blois and his allies, who found it hopeless to persist;—only passing mention can be made as

events which happened before the arrival of King Edward on the scene. The English under his command invested Rennes, Vannes, and Nantes, but Edward, hearing that the enemy was reinforced, concentrated his troops and entrenched them under the walls of Vannes. Again no fight ensued, though the contending armies lay in sight of each other for some months. At last, through Papal intervention, a truce was agreed upon in January, 1343; and so ended Edward's third French campaign.

In 1345 a force under the Earl of Derby was sent to Guienne against the aggressions of the French. The siege of Auberoche, which reflected great credit on the English general, would claim attention did space permit; as would also that of Aiguillon two years afterwards, described as "the most famous siege and defence of the war," where Sir Walter Manny gallantly resisted the force of the entire French army from April to August.

In 1346, Edward, accompanied by the Prince of Wales, invaded Normandy, landing at Sainte Vaste, near Cape la Hogue, and, finding the French quite unprepared, marched within sight of the walls of Paris with a force of 30,000 men, through an open and undefended country; he took Caen (described by a contemporary as "larger than any town in England except London"), and collected a large quantity of booty. At Poissy he finally crossed the Seine, all the bridges having been destroyed by the inhabitants, and thus extricated himself from a position of great danger, as Philip had now appeared with a large force to oppose his progress. Edward's object was probably Calais, which he had determined to capture, and there was the further inducement to move in that direction in the hope of meeting the 40,000 Flemish allies, who had entered France in the north. But there was the Somme to cross as well, and across that river also the bridges had been destroyed. Retreat by the same route as he had come was impossible, as the country was pillaged and barren. Harassed by the enemy Edward retreated by Pontoise and Amiens to Oisemont, where he obtained information of a tidal ford called Blanche-Taque, near Abbeville.

There he was met by a French force of 12,000 men under Godemar de Fay, which, being routed with the loss of 2000 men, the English safely crossed the river ; but so near was the main army of the French that hardly had Edward's rear-guard passed the river than the enemy appeared on the bank which it had left. Edward, having gained his own lawful inheritance of Ponthieu, now determined to meet his foe, notwithstanding the great disparity in numbers. He selected a rising ground east of the wood and south of the village of Créci.

The following short account of the great battle (as, indeed, much of the information of this reign) is principally selected from the admirable history of Edward III., by the Rev. W. Warburton, to which work those who wish to read more of the doings of those stirring times are recommended to refer. "At daybreak on an ever-memorable Saturday, August 26, 1346, the king and the Prince of Wales, who was then in his fifteenth year, heard Mass and partook of the Sacrament, and the greater part of the army confessed themselves and received absolution. The king was to command the reserve of 700 men-at-arms and 2000 archers. The second division of 500 men-at-arms and 1200 bowmen, commanded by the Earls of Arundel and Northampton, were posted on the left. The third detachment, consisting of 800 men-at-arms, 2000 archers, and 1000 Welshmen under the Prince of Wales and Sir John Chandos, occupied the right ; they stood with the archers in front arranged 40 deep and 200 in breadth. It is stated that in the intervals between those bodies were planted very small bombards, which, 'with fire, and a noise like God's thunder, threw little balls of iron to frighten the horses.' It was determined by the king to fight the battle on foot. The skill of a general in those days was shown chiefly in the choice of the ground and the disposition of his forces. The battles were for the most part an aggregate of single hand-to-hand combats, in which victory depended more on the pluck and bottom of the men themselves than in the handling of the troops. The king rode from rank to rank, encouraging every man that day to defend and maintain his right and honour. The French advanced in disorder. The English stood up and formed ; and when the French king

saw them 'it stirred his blood, for he hated them ;' and flinging wide the oriflamme, or great scarlet banner of France, he furiously ordered his 15,000 crossbow-men to advance and dislodge them. But those Genoese marksmen were hungry, tired, and out of heart already, and a sudden tempest slackened the strings of their bows. In vain they advanced ; the English bowmen drew their bows dry and safe from their coverings, and caused them to retreat in disorder on the cavalry, which 'formed a hedge behind them,' and in their turn were thrown into confusion, causing a panic that was increased by the perpetual shower of arrows. The Prince of Wales's division was hardly pressed by the Count of Alençon on one side, and by the Count of Flanders on the other—so greatly, indeed, that Arundel and Northampton sent to King Edward for assistance. 'Is my son killed ?' said the king. 'No,' replied the messenger. 'Is he wounded ?' 'No, sire.' 'Then,' said he, 'tell those that sent you that he shall have no help from me. Let the boy win his spurs.' The fight was long and doubtful. The prince now charged his assailants and drove them back ; but he himself was flung to the ground in the *mêlée*, and his life barely saved by Richard de Beaumont, bearer of the great banner of Wales, which he flung over the fallen prince till rescued from his assailants. The Welshmen rushed under the bellies of the horses and stabbed them with their long knives, and slaughtered the heavily fallen riders as they lay helpless in their armour on the ground, for no quarter was the order of the day on both sides."

How the blind King John of Bohemia was led into the battle by his own request, so that he might strike "one blow with his sword," and fought valiantly ; how he and his two attendant knights were found the next day stretched side by side in death ; how King Philip's horse was killed, and how, twice wounded, he barely escaped being made prisoner ; how the sacred oriflamme itself had been beaten down and barely rescued ;—are matters that must be more fully read elsewhere. King Edward, meeting with his son, clasped him in his arms, saying, "Fair son, God give you good perseverance ; right royally have you behaved to-day, and proved yourself

worthy of a crown"—a verdict which has been fully endorsed by posterity. The victory was made even more complete the following day, a detachment of the French army from Abbeville, ignorant of the battle, being surprised and routed with great slaughter. "The total number of the slain far exceeded that of the whole of the English army. When they had counted up the dead, and ascertained by their surcoats the names and rank of the fallen, the conquerors could hardly believe the greatness of their victory. The bodies of twelve sovereign princes and 1300 knights were found among the slain." It is said that the Prince of Wales on this occasion took from the helmet of the dead King of Bohemia its plume of ostrich feathers, and adopted it as his crest, with the motto *Ich dien*, which has been retained by the Princes of Wales ever since.

King Edward now pushed on to Calais, which he invested by building a town of huts round it, which he called "Newtown-the-Bold." * The siege was turned into a mere blockade, and though missiles were thrown and small cannon were used which threw metal bullets, the latter can hardly have been very formidable, for from three to four ounces was the average daily allowance of powder for each gun, and the whole stock of bullets for the siege was 204. When the siege had lasted ten months two small vessels were seen escaping out of the harbour; one of them was caught, but before surrendering the captain was seen to throw something into the sea. It was found at low water—an axe with a letter tied to it from the Governor, John de Vienne, to the French king, stating "that the garrison was in dreadful straits, that they had already eaten the horses, dogs, and cats, and that they could find nothing more to eat, unless they ate each other." Edward sent this letter to Philip, inviting him to send relief to Calais, "if he valued his fair fame." Philip was already near with an army of 200,000 men, and sent Eustace de Ribeaumont and two envoys to Edward with the following message: "Sire, the King of France sends us before you, and would have you know that he is here, and posted on the Sandgatte Hill to fight you; but he cannot

* Villeneuve la Hardie,

see or find any way of getting at you, though he has great desire to raise the siege of his good city of Calais. He would be very glad if your council and his could meet and determine upon a place to fight, and this we are charged to request of you." King Edward replied by a letter, still extant, that he accepted the challenge and appointed the day. But once again the French king did not fancy to risk a fight, broke up his camp, and marched away, leaving the accepted challenge unfulfilled and Calais to its fate. The governor offered to capitulate. Edward's final terms are well known, and the six chief burgesses bareheaded and barefooted, with halters round their necks, bringing him the keys of Calais, appeared before him. "On them," said the king, "I will do my will." "Then Queen Philippa, rising from the king's side, fell upon her knees and entreated him with tears to spare the burghers for her sake, and for the love of Our Lady's Son"—a prayer that was granted; and the six brave men, being clothed and fed by the queen's orders, returned to their fellow-townsmen. The king expelled all the inhabitants who refused to swear fealty to him, re-peopling the town with Englishmen and making it a great emporium of English trade.

At this period King Edward "saw himself at the height of earthly prosperity. His revenues were nearly doubled by the new impulse which he had given to trade and commerce. A series of military successes had appreciably added to the territory and enormously enhanced the prestige of England on the Continent. The victory of Neville's Cross had placed the Scotch king as a hostage in his hands. He found himself still in the prime of life, the foremost power in Europe, the ruler of a loyal, united, and prosperous people; happy in his domestic relations, and with an heir renowned in arms though still a boy in years, whose character, ability, and dutifulness could give rise to no feelings but those of love and admiration. There was no declared war after the victory of Créci and surrender of Calais, but the French lost no opportunity of harassing the Continental possessions of King Edward."

A treacherous attempt to regain Calais was made on the part of De Chargny, the French Governor of St. Omer, and

the incident is detailed at length, as nothing could better show the chivalrous magnanimity and splendid courage of the king. "It was arranged," writes Mr. Warburton, "that on December 31, 1349, the Governor of Calais, on the payment of 20,000 crowns of gold, should admit De Chargny into the castle, which completely commanded the town. But at the time appointed King Edward, the Prince of Wales, and Sir Walter Manny, who had crossed the Channel secretly with 300 men-at-arms and 600 archers, were lying in wait ; * and when the twelve knights and the 100 men-at-arms sent by De Chargny were admitted with the money, the drawbridge rose behind them, and they found themselves at the mercy of the English, who rushed out from their ambush with hatchets and drawn swords, and overpowered and secured them. Then Sir Walter Manny rode forth out of the town with the king and the Prince of Wales as simple knights under his banner to the bridge of Nieulay, beyond which De Chargny had not ventured to trust himself. The bridge having been secured in their rear, the Frenchmen had to fight for their liberties and lives, and they fought for them well. The king himself engaged with Sir Eustace de Ribeaumont, the same whom Philip had sent along with De Chargny to challenge the English to a pitched battle during the siege ; but neither recognised the other until King Edward 'raging like a wild boar,' and twice struck down on his knee by blows on his helmet, at length overcame his adversary and took him prisoner in fair fight. . . . It was not till the king received his unwilling guests at supper, and the Prince of Wales waited on them, that the Frenchmen discovered that they had been fighting with King Edward, who they thought was far away in England. The king, rebuking De Chargny for his treachery, took a chaplet of pearls from his own head, and placing it on De Ribeaumont's, begged him to wear it for his sake, and to tell all fair ladies that it was given to the bravest of knights by England's king. He then dismissed them unconditionally."

In 1350 was fought the sea-fight of L'Espagnols-sur-Mer, which is spoken of later ; and in that year King Philip died,

* A picturesque and fuller account of this incident may be read in Froissart, ch. 148-150.

and was succeeded by his son John. A triple invasion of France was determined on and carried out in 1355. It was planned that one army under the Prince of Wales was to land at Bordeaux; a second to reinforce the Countess de Montfort in Brittany; and a third, under King Edward himself, was to enter Normandy by way of Cherbourg. The king, meeting with a storm, was driven to Calais, where he landed, now meaning to invade France from that point, and laid waste Picardy and Artois. King John advanced to meet him, "but after mutual challenges, more or less courteously declined, the two armies withdrew." Soon after Edward abandoned his share of the triple invasion, and sailed for England to repel the inroad of the Scots.

The Prince of Wales had landed meanwhile at Bordeaux, and soon afterwards won the great victory of Poitiers on the 19th September, 1356, which belongs rather to a biography of the Black Prince (as he then came to be called for the first time by the French) than to that of King Edward.

In 1359 Edward again invaded France with 100,000 men, sailing from Sandwich "between daybreak and sunrise, and before nightfall entering the harbour of Calais." He invested Rheims, the siege of which, however, was raised owing to the failure of supplies for his army, and marched upon Paris. The French Regent—for King John was still a prisoner in England—refusing either to fight or to sue for peace, Edward determined to withdraw temporarily into Brittany to recruit his army, intending to renew the siege of Paris later on. Pope Innocent VI. intervened at this juncture, however, and the important peace of Brétigni was signed on the 8th May, 1360.

The campaigns of the Prince of Wales in Aquitaine and Spain—the victory of Navarrete in 1367 over Henry of Trastamare being the brightest exploit of arms in those expeditions—can only be mentioned in passing.

The great military operations of the reign are now coming to an end. War, it is true, was once more declared by France in 1369, and an attack made on Brittany; France also threatened an invasion of England, which, however, was not carried out. Military operations continued in a desultory fashion in the south

of France, success attending the English arms by the recapture of Limoges in 1371; but the advancing years of King Edward, the illness of the Black Prince, and the want of efficient leaders were the causes of many misfortunes and reverses to English interests. Yet another expedition sailed from England in that year for the relief of Thouars, but had to put back owing to stormy weather; and the failure of the last expedition of the reign under the Duke of Lancaster gave Pope Gregory XI. the opportunity which he sought of bringing about a peace between England and France, and a truce, which lasted until shortly before the death of King Edward, was concluded. This brings a short statement of the military doings of the reign to an end.

The consideration of Edward III.'s naval exploits and of the condition of the Navy, perhaps too long deferred, must now be dealt with. James, in his 'Naval History,' says that the *Great Harry*, built in 1488 during the reign of Henry VII., was the first ship of the Royal Navy; but there is reason to believe that Richard III. owned a few ships, which he employed. This gives the erroneous impression that previously to the periods named England had no navy. The contrary was the case, for Edward was constantly appointing new admirals to superintend naval matters. Lord Salisbury was appointed the first English Admiral of the Fleet in 1337, and Mr. Warburton states that on the threatened invasion by France in 1339, King Edward III. "created a Board to advise on the best means of protecting the English coast. . . . He also commanded his two admirals to take the sea, in whose special commission," that writer adds, "occur words which no Englishman of the present day can read without some feeling of pride in his country's long traditions of glory: 'Whereas our progenitors, the Kings of England, have been in all times past lords of the English sea on every side,' etc." It is certain, too, that the navy of the day comprised ships belonging to the king, for we read in the Royal accounts of his paying for new anchors for the *Christopher* and the *Cogge Edward*, and for eighty oaks to be sent to Kingston-on-Hull for building ships. A larger supply of vessels for naval purposes was, however, drawn from other sources, for though "the Cinque Ports had to provide a certain

number of cruisers, the bulk of the fighting ships were really merchant vessels impressed for the purpose, a definite contingent of which each seaport was called upon to supply." The ships of those days had but one mast, some with "castles" fore and aft ; in build they more resembled Chinese junks than the trim sailing craft of our day.

Eighteen ships co-operated in the war against Scotland in 1333, and defeated the twelve ships of John Crabbe (who, described as a *pirata crudelis et solemnus* on that occasion, afterwards became a faithful servant of King Edward), the Scotch vessels, after a momentary success, being burnt. The naval history of that period recounts several other expeditions against the Scots, among others that of an English fleet composed of 180 ships, which entered the Forth on the 1st July, 1335, and did much damage to the coast. The Channel was so unsafe, in spite of those successes, that English vessels were attacked in the harbours and carried off. Portsmouth and Southampton were successively plundered and burnt by the French, and so much havoc was caused by the latter that a special commission was appointed "to send to sea every serviceable ship, seaman, and fighting man that could be laid hands on."

An account of the successful naval expedition against Gadzand or Cadsand, an island in the mouth of the Scheldt, occupied by Flemish freebooters, is given by Mr. Laird Clowes in his important work, 'The Royal Navy,' as follows: "The expedition was organized under Henry, Earl of Derby, and Sir Walter Manny, who embarked at London with 500 men-at-arms and 2000 archers, dropped down the river, and having arrived off Margate, crossed from thence to the mouth of the Scheldt. It made Gadzand on November 10, 1337, and wind and tide being favourable, attacked immediately 'in the name of God and St. George.' The Flamands to the number of 5000, under Guy of Flanders, brother of Count Louis, were drawn up on the shore and on the dykes above it. The English squadron sailed directly into the harbour, clearing the sands with flights of arrows, and then throwing ashore all available hands. A close and furious fight ensued, and although the Flamands behaved most stubbornly, and lost a thousand

men, they were at last defeated, and Guy was taken. Gadzand was stormed, sacked, and burnt ; and Sir Walter Manny, returning, reached Orwell about November 20, to the great satisfaction of the king."

Sir Harris Nicolas mentions another remarkable engagement, which, though it resulted in a defeat of the English ships, must not be omitted from an account of the naval exploits of the time. He says : " A very gallant action was fought in this (1338) or early in the following year by the English ships—one the pride of the English Navy, called the *Christopher*, and the other the *Edward*, which were returning with rich cargoes from Flanders in company with three smaller vessels—against a French squadron. It is extraordinary that so honourable a conflict should not be mentioned by any native chronicler of the period. Minot . . . says that after the French galleys quitted Southampton (after burning it) they proceeded towards Zeeland and Flanders, and discovered the *Christopher* at Armouth ; that their fleet consisted of more than 48 galleys, two carracks, many galliots, and a number of small boats ; that though King Edward was not there at the moment, he soon heard of the arrival of the French, and went with his soldiers to his ships, and found the galley-men were superior by more than a hundred to one ; that a conflict ensued in which the English slew sixty French for every ten of their own men ; that the English fought both day and night, but were overcome at last by the superior numbers of the enemy. And, he adds, that never before did men fight better than the English on that occasion." All must regret with Sir H. Nicolas that the accounts of that engagement given by Froissart and De Nangis are so incomplete, especially as he remarks that that of Minot, just quoted, which was written in verse ("not a satisfactory vehicle for nautical, nor, indeed, for any other facts"), is imperfect and perhaps incorrect. The *Christopher* did not remain long in the possession of the enemy.

Great naval preparations were being made when King Edward returned from his first campaign in France in 1340, intending to return as soon as possible and with as large a number of ships as he could muster. Of the great victory

over the French fleet at Sluys, and the events which immediately preceded it, the following account, written by Robert de Avesbury, a contemporary chronicler, is given :— *

“ It happened that on the Saturday fortnight before the Feast of St. John the Baptist (about the 10th June, 1340) the king was at Orewell,† where there were forty ships, or thereabouts, preparing for his passage into Flanders, where he was going to his wife and children, whom he had left in the city of Ghent, as well as to confer with his allies about the measures necessary to be taken for carrying on the war, intending to sail in two days’ time ; but the Archbishop of Canterbury sent to give him intelligence that Philip of Valois, his competitor for the crown of France, having had notice of his intended passage, with much diligence and as much privacy as the nature of the thing would admit, had assembled a great fleet, which lay in the port of Sluys, in order to intercept him, whereupon he advised his Majesty to provide himself with a better squadron, lest he and those with him should perish. The king, yielding no belief to his advice, answered that he was resolved to sail at all events. The archbishop upon this quitted his seat in council, obtaining the king’s leave to retire, and delivered up to him the great seal. His Majesty sent, therefore, for Sir Robert de Morley, his admiral, and one Crabbe, a skilful seaman, and gave them orders to inquire into the truth of the matter, who quickly returned, and brought him the same news he had heard from the archbishop. Upon which the king said : ‘ Ye have agreed with that prelate to tell me this tale, in order to stop my voyage ; but,’ added he, angrily, ‘ I will go without you ; and you, who are afraid where there is no ground of fear, may stay here at home.’ The admiral and the seaman replied that they would stake their heads that if the king persisted in this resolution he and all who went with him would certainly be destroyed ; however, they were ready to attend him, even to certain death. The king having heard them, sent for the Archbishop of Canterbury back, and with abundance of kind speeches prevailed

* See also Froissart, ch. 49.

† The port of Harwich, at the mouth of the River Orwell.

upon him to receive the great seal again into his care ; after which the king issued his orders to all the ports in the north and south, and to the Londoners likewise, to send him aid : so that in the space of ten days he had a navy as large as he desired, and such unexpected reinforcements of archers and men-at-arms that he was forced to send many of them home ; and with this equipage he arrived before the haven of Sluys on the Feast of St. John the Baptist. The English, perceiving on their approach that the French ships were linked together with chains, and that it was impossible for them to break their line of battle, retired a little and stood back to sea. The French, deceived by this feint, broke their order, and pursued the English, who they thought fled before them. But these, having gained the sun and wind, tacked, and fell upon them with such fury that they quickly broke, and totally dispersed them ; so that upwards of 30,000 French were slain upon the spot, of whom numbers, through fear, jumped of their own accord into the sea, and were miserably drowned. Two hundred great ships were taken, in one of which only there were 400 dead bodies. The day after this victory was gained it was published in London by the voice of the people, which is said to be the voice of God ; but though the rumour thereof, through the distance of places, was uncertain, yet on the Wednesday following the king's eldest son had perfect intelligence thereof at Waltham."

Further details of the battle run as follows : The king set sail from Harwich in the *Cogge Thomas*, attended by his retinue on the 22nd June, and being joined by the northern fleet, under Sir Robert de Morley, making about 200 ships of all sorts, arrived the following day off Blankenberghe. Three knights were sent ashore to reconnoitre. The tide not serving, the day after the English fleet remained inactive. King Edward, having gained the "sun and the tide," put his biggest ships in the van, filling them with archers, and between each of the large crafts he placed a small vessel full of men-at-arms. Each French ship had strung up to the mast a small boat full of stones for the use of the men in the tops. An attack was made by the English, and there was "a general *mêlée*, the ships

grappling one another, and the men boarding with swords, axes, and pikes, while the archers in their rear discharged showers of arrows." The battle lasted from eight in the morning to seven at night; "and even after this there was a second dispute, for thirty French ships endeavouring to escape in the dark, the English attacked them, took one and sunk several others. The king behaved with equal courage and conduct throughout the whole fight, giving his orders in person, and moving as occasion required from place to place." The French lost from 25,000 to 30,000 men, including one of their admirals, and another one was hanged. The English loss was about 4000. All authorities seem to agree that the battle was one of the most bloody and desperate on record. The description may be brought to a close by King Edward's own account, written to the Prince of Wales in a letter, a copy of the original being still preserved in the archives of the city of London.

"VERY DEAR SON,

"We are persuaded that you are desirous to know good news of us, and how we have fared since our departure from England. Therefore we would have you learn that on the Thursday after the day when we quitted the port of Orewell we sailed all day and the night following, and on Friday, about the hour of noon, we arrived upon the coast of Flanders, before Blankenberghe, where we had a sight of the fleet of our enemies, who were all crowded together in the port of the Swyn; and seeing that the tide did not serve us to close with them, we lay to all that night. On Saturday, St. John's Day, soon after the hour of noon, at high tide, in the name of God, and confident in our just quarrel, we entered the said port upon our said enemies, who had assembled their ships in very strong array, and who made a most noble defence all that day and the night afterwards; but God, by His power and miracle, granted us the victory over them our enemies, for which we thank Him as devoutly as we are able. And we would have you know that the number of the ships, galleys, and large barges of our enemies amounted

to 190, and that they were all taken, save twenty-four altogether, which fled, and some of which are since taken at sea. And the number of men-at-arms and other armed people amounted to 35,000, of which number, by estimation, 5000 have escaped ; and the rest, as we have been given to understand by some people who have been taken alive, be dead in many places on the coast of Flanders. On the other hand, all our ships—that is to say, the *Christopher*, and the others which were lost at Middelburg—are now retaken ; and there are taken in this fleet three or four as large as the *Christopher*. The Flamands were inclined to come over to us in the battle from first to last (*estoient de bone volenté d'avoir venus a no ala bataille du commencement tanqe ala fin*). Thus God, our Lord, has shown abundant favour, for which we and all our friends are ever bound to render Him grace and thanks. Our purpose is to remain in peace in the river until we have taken in hand certain questions with our allies and our other friends in Flanders concerning what is done.

“Very dear son, may God be your keeper.

“Given under our secret seal in our ship the *Cogge Thomas*, Wednesday, the Eve of St. Peter and St. Paul.”

The king kept the sea for some days longer to put his victory out of dispute, and landing, marched to Ghent.

The Navy also bore its share in the important campaign which began with the march on Paris and ended with the battle of Créci and capture of Calais, for we read that after disembarking the king's troops at La Hogue, “200 vessels with 400 archers, and 100 men-at-arms were retained to operate on the coast. At La Hogue, eleven French ships, eight of which had fore and stern castles, were taken and burnt ; at Barfleur nine ships with fore and stern castles, and several smaller craft were set on fire, and subsequently the town suffered the same fate. All the coast from Rouen to Caen was ravaged and devastated. Cherbourg was burnt, and sixty-one ships of war, twenty-three crayers, and many smaller vessels laden with wine, were destroyed there in the vicinity.” The burning of Portsmouth and Southampton would seem to have been amply avenged.

Great preparations were also made in 1350 to punish the Spaniards for their repeated aggressions on the sea ; and Mr. Warburton gives the following graphic description of the battle of L'Espagnols-sur-Mer (so called) off Winchelsea on the 29th August of that year :—

“It is impossible to omit mention of that famous sea-fight in which the naval pride of Spain was first humbled by an English fleet, and which vindicated for Edward III. his proudest and best-deserved title of ‘King of the Sea.’ . . . It was the valour and prowess of the king himself which won the day. . . . When the fleets were advancing across the Channel to meet each other (wind blowing fresh from N.E., and the enemy coming down Channel) King Edward, who commanded in person, sat in the bow of the *Cogge Thomas* ‘in a black velvet jacket and a beaver hat which became him well,’ and passed the time away joyously, listening to his minstrels’ music and the songs which John of Chandos had brought home from Germany, but ever and anon turning up his eye to the look-out on the masthead, to know if the enemy were yet in sight. At last the man on the watch shouted, ‘I see a ship, and she looks like a Spaniard!’ Then again, ‘I see two, three, four of them!’ and again, ‘God help me! I see so many that I cannot count them!’ At the first onset the *Cogge Thomas* was struck so hard amidships by a huge Spanish ‘nief’ that her mast went by the board. They thought she was sinking, so they grappled her fast to another great Spanish ship, and the king and the English knights and nobles—for it was by them that the battle was fought and won—swarmed up on to the deck of the tall Spaniard, beat back her crew with swords and hatchets, and threw every soldier into the sea. Then, manning her with English seamen, and casting off their own sinking ship, they bore down in their prize upon the remaining Spaniards, some twenty of which were ultimately boarded or sent to the bottom. The Prince of Wales, too, grappled a Spanish nief of immense size, and carried her after a furious fight, just in time to see his own ship go down. Another English vessel got disabled, and entangled with a Spaniard, which, seeing her

helpless condition, made sail, and was carrying her off to sea. But a 'varlet' named Hannekin climbed up the side and leaped on the deck of the nief in the middle of her crew, and, before they could stop him, cut the halliards of the mainsail, which, coming down with a run upon her deck, the English boarded the Spaniard in the confusion, threw her crew overboard, and steered her back as an English ship into the battle."

The number of ships captured from the Spaniards has been put down by different historians of the time as between fourteen and twenty-six, besides those which were sunk.

This brief notice of the doings of the Navy may be brought to a conclusion by quoting Sir H. Nicolas's words on this period of naval history, as having an exceptional interest at the present time, though written more than fifty years ago.

"The name of Edward the Third is more identified with the naval glory of England than that of any other of her sovereigns, for though the sagacious Alfred and the chivalrous Richard commanded fleets and defeated the enemy at sea, Edward gained in his own person two signal victories, fighting on one occasion until his ship actually sank under him. But while the history of one part of Edward's reign is the brightest in our early annals, his exploits were followed by events which teach a lesson to this country of the highest value, and which was, perhaps, never more important than at this time, when a great nation is her avowed rival on the ocean, with a long series of disasters to avenge. Like the Nile, Camperdown, and Trafalgar, the battles of Sluys and L'Espagnols-sur-Mer led the English to imagine that they were always to command the sea, and the Navy was so entirely neglected that France and Spain obtained, and for many years preserved, their maritime superiority. Defeats, if not disgrace, almost a total destruction of commerce, and, far worse, constant invasions of our shores, attended by rapine, bloodshed, and all other atrocities, were the consequences of this fatal error, which established, however, the momentous truth, that the honour, safety, greatness, and prosperity of England depend upon her Navy."

A complete memoir of King Edward III. should rightly speak also of domestic events of his reign, such as the gradual formation of the Constitutional form of government, which is now both the pride of this country and the object of envy to others; of the institution of Justices of the Peace; of the decay of feudalism and the extension of liberty of the person to individuals; of the progress of the English language, which now became the national tongue, and of literature, in which the great name of Chaucer stands pre-eminent, with that of the author of the popular 'Vision of Piers Ploughman,' Robert Langland; of the great Wiclif who lived in this reign; and of notable events, as the first use of gunpowder in war, the foundation of the Order of the Garter, and building of the Round Tower of Windsor Castle; but too much space has already been taken up in recounting the military and naval doings of what has been happily called the reign of heroes.

King Edward died on the 21st June, 1377, in his palace of Shene, in the sixty-fifth year of his age and the fifty-first of his reign. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. The good Queen Philippa died in 1369, and the Black Prince in 1376—two events which materially affected the health of the king. Edward III. was of middle height, and gracefully and strongly built; "he had a winning address and commanding countenance—'a godlike face,' the old chronicler says." At a time when "learning was left to louts" his training was well adapted to fit him for his exalted place, though he was more of a soldier than a scholar. His courage was so great that it has been described as "ferocious." "No subject dared to approach the throne but with bared head and bended knee," though we have seen that he could be both magnanimous and forgiving. "Prudent as well as bold, he was a genuine Englishman in his confidence in himself and countrymen, and in his love of manly exercise, personal pride, and popular sympathies." He was the "embodiment of the ideal of chivalry of his time," which he so well fulfilled throughout his career that he rightly claims to rank as the first Knight of Europe of his day.

FRANCISCVS DRAECK NOBILISSIMVS ECVBES ANGLIÆ AN ET SVET



SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.

II.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.

BY L. G. CARR LAUGHTON.

IT is, perhaps, strange that we Imperialists should feel the deep interest we do in the Court of Elizabeth, who was, with all her grandeur, but an island queen. We are always ready to hear of the glories of her reign, and to many the chief interest appears to centre in the literary or the ecclesiastical upheaval of the period. To many, again, the true and tragic history of Mary Stuart appeals; but without disparagement to either Burleigh or Mary Queen of Scots, to Spenser or to the Church of England, it may be pointed out that the movement which engages our attention most closely is neither political, nor literary, nor yet religious; it is the restless, expansive movement. The chief glory lies in the enterprising spirit that called men over seas in the wake of the great discoverers; in the resolute undertaking, and the not less resolute carrying through, of schemes which paved the way for our vast inheritance. With every branch of Elizabethan activity there is identified, at least, one great name; from this work of extension the name of Drake is inseparable.

There is a good deal of uncertainty about Drake's early years, and it is not intended here to examine into the details of this question, which, with Drake's whole career, has recently for the first time been both fully and skilfully handled. Francis, the eldest of the numerous sons of Edmund Drake, was born somewhere about the year 1540 at Crowndale, near Tavistock in Devon. Till the generation to which Francis belonged the Drakes do not seem to have been a seafaring family. Edmund

Drake, indeed, is supposed to have followed the sea in his youth, but his only connection with the Royal Navy was when in his later years he was preacher and reader of prayers to the fleet in the Medway. By inheritance the Drakes of Tavistock were farmers, and by marriage they were related to many of the yeoman squires of Devon, so that it does not at once appear what sent Francis to sea. The impulse began when his father, a staunch Reformation man, forced to flee with family and goods from the intolerant but conservative West, found himself dwelling in an old war-hulk on the Medway. Here, taught by their father, the boys were brought up. All their early training was towards the sea, and it was natural that to the sea the boys should turn to help the fortunes of the family. Francis, as being the eldest, was the first to go. He was apprenticed to the master and owner of a small Channel trader, and with him continued through his boyhood. Doubtless it was a rough school, but, to judge by results, it was a good one. Toil and hardship gave him an iron frame ; the rubbing against many men on both sides of the Channel quickened his wits, while we cannot doubt but that the early experience of Spanish Catholicism strengthened the Puritanism of his young days. The middle of the Tudor era was a time when religious antagonisms ran high ; when religion and politics were not, as now, things apart ; and when religious prejudice, by being grafted on to mundane dislike, could bloom out into a hatred of exceptional merit. When the old shipman died, and, being a bachelor, left his vessel to the lad who in obedience had learned to command, Drake was well qualified to take advantage of his good fortune.

He did not, however, long continue in the Channel trade, but sold his ship and attached himself to the fortunes of the Hawkins family, men of Devon and his kinsmen. He could have taken no wiser step, for the sons of old William Hawkins bore, like their father, as high a repute as any in England for adventurous mariners. The first voyage Drake made was no further than to the northern coast of Spain, but this was followed by a visit to the West Indies. Little, indeed, is known of this, save that in 1565, or more probably in the

following year, he was with a Captain Lovell at Rio de la Hacha, and there suffered wrong from Spanish treachery. Doubtless the fruit of this expedition was an exaggeration of his hatred of everything belonging to the King of Spain.

The loss of his venture does not seem to have dispirited him, for in 1567 he was ready to sail with John Hawkins on what was destined to be the most momentous of all English voyages hitherto undertaken. To appreciate the position in the West Indies, it must be borne in mind that by a Papal Bull, whereat the English scoffed, the New World was granted to the King of Spain, whose chief desire was to exclude foreigners from its lucrative trade. French corsairs had shattered any belief Philip may have had in the possibility of peaceful trade with aliens, and also John Hawkins's earlier slaving ventures had caused a repetition of the stringent Spanish trade regulations.

Nominally the expedition was sent out by a private company, and though the Queen, by contributing two ships, the *Jesus of Lubeck* and the *Minion*, became a principal shareholder, her name did not appear. The Spaniards stoutly opposed the sailing of the squadron, which started at last, after tedious diplomacy, with many assurances that its destination was the Portuguese gold-coast, and its object to avenge the recent attack on Fenner at the Azores. The deception was the easier, as the squadron did, in fact, proceed to the African coast, there to fill up with negroes, the contraband cargo that commanded the readiest sale in the West Indies. Besides the Queen's ships there sailed in this squadron four private vessels, of which one, the *Judith*, of fifty tons, was commanded by Drake. Starting in October, 1567, the squadron, with some difficulty, made the African coast, and at once began reprisals. That they had no direct commission to do so did not immediately concern Drake, who did his share of the work with the rest, and who, when the *Grace of God*, a new ship of 150 tons, was taken, was moved into her. When at last they had collected a cargo of negroes, they sailed for the West Indies, and, arrived there, they scraped their ships on the Spanish coast, and set about trading as best they might.

The Spaniards were not responsive. Their orders had been emphatic, but the greed of gain prevailed on them to accept conventional excuses for Hawkins's presence, and one way or another the English did a good trade. At Rio de la Hacha there was trouble. Drake was sent on from Curaçoa in the *Judith*, to which he had returned, with another small ship to reconnoitre. Being fired on, however, he promptly instituted a blockade—he must have had a special dislike for Rio de la Hacha—and drove ashore a despatch-boat that tried to enter. Hawkins, when he arrived, landed a party and cleared the town, and at night the Spaniards crept back to trade with him. Spaniards are not easily made to run, and it has been suggested that there was between them and Hawkins collusion for a mere show of resistance; but of this Drake, at any rate, knew nothing.

July and August, the hurricane months, were now at hand, and Hawkins, having disposed of nearly all his cargo, passed round the west end of Cuba on his way homeward. But a hurricane caught the fleet, the *Jesus* became unseaworthy, the *William* and *John* parted company, and no harbour could be found either on the Florida coast or among the Tortugas. Caught between the devil and the deep sea, Hawkins bore up for San Juan de Ulua itself, the port of Mexico.

It would be too long to detail this famous episode, and, after all, the story concerns Drake only so far as it furnished him with a further motive against Spain. Briefly, the squadron entered unopposed, because it was mistaken for the convoy fleet from Spain. A truce was sworn, and on the next day what was believed to be the convoy fleet, but was in reality the Mexican flota under Don Martin Enriquez, appeared off the harbour. Hawkins had the flota at his mercy; he could by keeping it out deliver it to the mercy of the first norther that blew, but from the responsibility he shrank. Terms were arranged, and the Spaniards entered. The crews fraternized on shore, and for some days the English worked on, not perhaps without suspicion, but so far off their guard that when a treacherous attack was made in force they were taken very much by surprise. The men ashore were murdered, and a desperate onslaught was made on the

ships. The *Minion* and *Judith* drew clear, but the *Jesus* was surrounded and the *Angel* sunk. The heavy fire of the two Queen's ships destroyed the two Spanish flagships, but the *Jesus*, attacked by fireships, was at length abandoned. The fight had been most desperate, and the English, in spite of their great loss, had given more than they received. They had killed 540 Spaniards, and had they had to deal with the fleet alone, apart from shore batteries and soldiers, there is no doubt that it would have been entirely destroyed. There was nothing left but to bear away for England, and this they did. An heroic act of self-sacrifice should here be mentioned. It was impossible to carry all the crews home in the vessels which remained. One hundred volunteered to land, and take their chance of subsisting till they might get a passage home. These men, after wandering in the woods, were taken and sent as prisoners to Mexico, where some time afterwards most of them perished miserably by torture and fire at the hands of the Inquisition. The *Judith* reached home first with the tidings of the fight, and when men heard them they supposed that the quarrel must result in open war. But open war did not, at present, suit Elizabeth's policy; and she preferred to encourage private adventurers in striking blows at the commerce and the prestige of Spain.

Following this voyage, Drake seems to have taken service in the Royal Navy, and to have been with Wynter at Rochelle. In the summer of 1569 he married a Devonshire girl named Mary Newman, but had no mind to settle down when the chance of an adventure against the Spaniards called him again to sea. In 1570 and 1571 he made two voyages to the West, the first with the two small ships *Dragon* and *Swan*, the second with the *Swan* alone, his object in either case being to reconnoitre. In this he succeeded admirably, and even gained among the Spaniards a reputation for humanity to his prisoners. Primed at length with the requisite knowledge, and forwarded in his enterprise by money from those who secretly favoured it, he sailed from Plymouth Sound on the 24th May, 1572, in the *Pascha*, of seventy tons and forty-seven men, having in company the *Swan*, of twenty-five tons, commanded by his

brother John. Stowed aboard in pieces were three pinnaces, and the ships were as well found as any that ever sailed from England. They had a quick passage, and went at once to a small hidden harbour on the Gulf of Darien, where Drake had left stores on a former voyage. But the Spaniards had discovered the place, and the stores were gone. Drake, however, was loath to depart, and busied himself setting up the pinnaces, at which work he was found by Captain Rance, then pirating in those seas in Sir Edward Horsey's ship. The two parties joined hands, and in the pinnaces, with a shallop of Rance's, went up the coast towards Nombre de Dios. At the Islands of Pines they took some negroes loading timber, and learnt from them that both Nombre and Panama were in a state of alarm through daily dread of an attack from the Cimaroons.

All the same, Drake resolved to make a dash for it. He came off the place at night, landed an hour before dawn and roused the Spaniards in the shore battery by tumbling their guns into the sand. The town awoke, and everything depended on speed. In two parties they cleared the streets, having agreed to meet in the plaza. Drake reached the rendezvous first, and was there stoutly opposed by a strong body of Spaniards. While the fight was raging the other party under John Drake and Oxenham appeared, and the Spaniards, deceived by drum and trumpet and blazing fire-pikes into thinking the English more numerous than they were, gave ground and fled through the inland gate. In feverish haste they now looked round for the spoil, and in the governor's house found no less than three hundred and sixty tons of silver. But it was useless to them, and on they rushed to find the King's Treasure-house, where the gold and pearls were stored. Down by the waterside they found it, but great delay occurred as they tried to force a way in, and the men, fearing the dawn, began to wish themselves away. The Spaniards were gathering in their rear, but Drake would not give ground a foot: he had brought them, he said, to the world's treasure-house, and if they did not profit by it the blame was theirs. He called for volunteers to clear the plaza again while Oxenham could get the treasure, and success

seemed in hand when Drake fell in a dead faint. Wounded in the leg at the first charge, he had his boot full of blood, but had held on doggedly lest his men should be dispirited. They carried him down to the boats, sorely against his will, swearing that his life was more to them than all the gold of the Indies. As they drew off they took a store-ship, and with her went to the victualling island opposite the town, where for two days they lay unmolested, the victims of as glorious a failure as any recorded.

Rance now parted company, and Drake established himself in a position where he could pass the rainy season, and whence he could cut up the trade from Cartagena to Nombre. The *Swan* was scuttled that the pinnaces might be better manned, John Drake was moved into the *Pascha*, while Francis himself took command of the pinnaces. In them he made numberless small raids along the coast, more to terrorize the Spaniards and to keep his men in heart than from any profit he could gain from them, and on one occasion rode out a fortnight's heavy weather in the harbour of Cartagena itself, in spite of persistent efforts to dislodge him. Meanwhile, John Drake was killed in a rash attempt, and the early months of 1573 saw many men perish in the camp, among them being Joseph Drake, of what was in all likelihood yellow fever. With the dry season they set off over the Cordilleras, led by their negro allies, to surprise the mule-trains on their way across the isthmus. In this march Drake, first of Englishmen, saw the southern ocean, and vowed at once to sail thereon. Outside Panama two mule-trains were stopped, but the gold-train had been alarmed, and no treasure was found. Drake fell back by way of Venta Cruz, which he looted, and pending a further attempt, created a diversion at sea. When the dread of him on shore was in part allayed, he suddenly re-appeared, and at the back of Nombre succeeded at last in taking a gold-train. So great was the booty that the only thought now was of England, but so reduced by plague and warfare was their company that the *Pascha* was given to their prisoners, and they reached home in August, 1573, in two small prizes.

In England Drake found the difficulties with Spain in a fair

way of being settled, and as his presence was likely to be embarrassing, he disappeared, probably to Ireland. When the storm blew over, and the question of his piracy was shelved, he appeared in time to take service with Essex, and in command of a small squadron co-operated with him on the coast of Ulster. In the horrors of that campaign Drake had but a secondary part, his work concerning him chiefly with the Scottish galleys, so that, whatever we may think of Essex, Drake must be acquitted on the charge of brutality. So far as he was himself concerned, the chief interest of this service was that it first brought him into contact with Thomas Doughty, soldier and courtier, a man of excellent parts, but of questionable morals.

When, in 1576, Spanish aggression drove Elizabeth to think of reprisals, it was to Drake first that she turned. Drake was clearly the man who could best carry them out. He and the sailors whom he could gather were alike keen for adventure and eager to revenge the cruelties which English sailors had suffered from the Spaniards. There was, as usual, delay and vacillation in the Queen's policy, and a disinclination to provide money needed for equipment. But at length all difficulties were overcome, and on the 15th November, 1577, Drake ran out of Plymouth Sound in the *Pelican*, of 100 tons, followed by John Wynter as vice-admiral in the *Elizabeth*, and by the *Marygold*, *Swan* (victualler), and *Christopher*. There was a fable of a voyage to Alexandria, but it was probably well-known in the squadron that they were bound for the New World, though the actual scheme was locked in Drake's own breast. They ran down the African coast to Cape Blanco, taking prizes as they went, and thence a course was laid for the Cape Verde Islands and the River Plate. When the object of the voyage was disclosed ill-will began to show itself; not that the seamen were disaffected, but the contemplation of so vast an enterprise shook their confidence for a while, and there was sedition enough aboard in the person of Thomas Doughty, who had sailed as a volunteer in command of the soldiers, and had been made captain of a prize. Drake tried various shifts to smother the growing

mutiny ; he moved Doughty from ship to ship, he even had him aboard with himself. But the complaints followed him, and, as they beat southward ever against bad weather that grew rapidly worse, Doughty's conduct grew still more outrageous. So it was that when they came to Port St. Julian, on the Patagonian coast, Drake resolved that the mutiny must be stamped out, and that a severe example was needed. There is no shadow of a doubt of the guilt of the accused, and surely we may allow to Drake the right of following the custom of the sea and, as admiral, of dealing with his mutineers. The court whose legality has been called in question was composed of Drake, as judge, and a jury of the chief men of the squadron. The trial was held, so far as might be, in accordance with the method of procedure in England, and Doughty was condemned and beheaded. Gilbert in like case failed, and his failure is Drake's justification. Drake, indeed, like Nelson, knew when to hang a man, and Sir Humphry Gilbert did not. There can be no doubt that Doughty richly deserved his fate, for his crime had been a deliberate intention to wreck the voyage ; what is in doubt is his motive. It is said that he was the agent of the King of Spain, of Court intrigues, of whatnot jealousies besides, but in support of none of these contentions is there evidence enough. What more natural than to suppose that Doughty had joined, like the rest, in hopes of a pleasant cruise to the West Indies, with a brush with the Spaniards to flavour it ? that the disclosure of the real object alarmed him ? that the length of time he would have to spend at sea annoyed him into the disloyalty which resulted in his deposition from his command ? Following his disgrace, it is not hard to imagine the workings of a vindictive temper brooding under a sense of wrong and indignity.

Be these things as they may, the lesson had a most salutary effect, and, as though they had thrown their Jonah overboard, they passed the Strait of Magellan with little difficulty beyond that which is inseparable from the passage. But no sooner was he through than a tremendous and long-continued storm drove Drake out of all reckoning, and dispersed the squadron.

The *Marygold* went down with all hands, the *Elizabeth* bore up for home, and the *Pelican* alone was left, now re-named the *Golden Hind* from the armorial bearings of Hatton. Driven far to the southward and eastward, Drake found himself tossed on a waste of waters where the great southern continent should have been, and in this manner was discovered the passage round the Horn.

When the wind was fair the *Golden Hind* began her journey northwards, and gained the first rough knowledge of the Chilian coast. It was at Valparaiso that the first prize was made, and thence they continued their journey, picking up some small amount of treasure on the way. In latitude 30° they hoped to be joined by the *Elizabeth*, but, finding no trace of her, went on to Arica, where two barks with silver on board were seized. At Callao de Lima were thirty ships, and of these Drake rifled seventeen in a manner which suggests that their crews were not on board; but far more valuable than his booty was the news he gained of a great plate ship which had lately sailed thence for Panama. The coast was now alarmed, and he resolved to hasten after the *Cacafuego*, and to leave his prizes behind him. At every port he found that the Spaniard was still ahead. A golden chain was promised to the seaman who first sighted her; and this was earned at last in latitude 1° N. She might still escape to land: so Drake was anxious to delay his near approach till dusk, and yet not to cause suspicion by appearing to stand off. He stopped his way by trailing astern skins filled with water, and so came slowly up, in the guise of a lumbering merchantman. At nightfall the course was quickened again. Drake overhauled his prize, boarded her, and took possession with little resistance. So vast was the booty that the original project on Panama was at once abandoned, and the only question was, as before at Nombre, how to get home. He could not return south, for the alarm was too hot, so he determined to seek the fabled Straits of Anian. Up the coast he went, and all the coast of Mexico rang with his name: higher yet, to Cape Mendocino, to Vancouver. But here his crew, enervated by the tropics, could not stand the comparative cold, and as the

coast still trended westward he returned South. At New Albion, identified now with the neighbourhood of San Francisco, he repaired his ship, and then, trusting to charts he had taken out of a prize, it was Westward Ho! again, Magellan's Straits being now watched, and impossible to run through safely. For sixty-eight days they had no sight of land, when at last the Pellew Islands rose out of the sea, whence, without charts, they ran through the reef-encumbered seas of Polynesia. Once they struck, and were in imminent danger of perishing; but they floated off unhurt, and, holding steadfastly on their course, put a girdle round the globe, and reached Plymouth on the 26th September, 1580, after an absence of two years and ten months.

A curious trace of his voyage through the Malacca Straits is preserved in a letter from the Eastern traveller John Newberie written a few years later. Newberie and his companions were imprisoned at Ormuz. The Governor alleged various causes for this treatment, "and among the rest he said that Master Drake was sent out of England with many ships, and came to Maluco, and there laded cloues, and finding a gallion there of the Kings of Portugal, hee caused two pieces of his greatest ordinance to be shot at the same: and so, perceiving that this did greatly grieve them, I asked, if they would be revenged of me for that which Master Drake had done. To the which he answered, no: though his meaning was the contrary." *

Drake found the rival Sovereigns with their grievances still unsettled. He was, in consequence, doubtful as to how he would be received, but his doubts were resolved by an order to proceed to Court, and to Court he went, and with him rich samples of the spoil. Elizabeth heard him and pondered; Spain was clamouring for his head, and for the restoration of the treasure, but to restore money once in her hands was for Elizabeth a constitutional impossibility. So she kept it and knighted Drake. Philip next turned to assassination, and found a ready instrument in John Doughty. But reticence was not a family virtue with the Doughtys, and John shortly found himself lodged securely in prison. Meanwhile, a project

* Ryley's 'Life of Ralph Fitch,' p. 78.

for the restoration of Don Antonio of Portugal was on foot, and with the ordering of a squadron to carry it out Drake's hopes rose. But the expedition was countermanded, and Sir Francis had to soothe his impatience with Parliamentary duties and the mayoralty of Plymouth till a further chance should offer.

So far, Drake's raids had been reprisals on a small scale for private wrongs ; also, though he had had ample encouragement from high places, he had held no commission. This was now changed. Philip's labours to equip a huge fleet placed it beyond doubt that England was seriously threatened, and Drake found himself for the first time in command of a large fleet and the holder of a commission from the Queen. In September, 1585, he sailed from Plymouth with his flag in the *Elizabeth Bonaventure*, having with him twenty-one sail and over two thousand men. Martin Frobisher was his vice-admiral, and Christopher Carleill commanded the soldiers. They ran down to the Spanish coast, sheltered at Vigo and threatened the town, and then passed on to the Cape Verde Islands, leaving the Azores and Canaries unmolested. They stayed to burn Santiago, but paid the penalty in a fever which carried off many men. They pushed on rapidly to Dominica and St. Christopher's, whence they went to Hispaniola, with the determination to take San Domingo, the strongest city in the Indies. Carleill, with a thousand men, was landed under cover of night ten miles east of the town, and next day the ships threatened a landing close under the walls. The whole Spanish force marched out to oppose them, and so presented its flank to Carleill's attack. The enemy was routed, pursuers and pursued entered the town pell-mell, and the place was won. With some difficulty a ransom of 25,000 ducats was obtained, with which and some small quantity of plunder they passed on to treat Cartagena much after the same fashion. The ransom of the capital of the Spanish Main was 110,000 ducats, but here again they suffered heavily from yellow fever. It had been intended to try Nombre and Panama, but the towns were alarmed, and the English force so seriously weakened that the plan was abandoned. As they passed north with the Gulf Stream they occupied St. Augustine in

Florida, and then, taking up the remnant of Raleigh's colonists in Virginia, sailed for home.

Antwerp had fallen, and Philip was at the zenith of his power when Drake reached England. He was sent to keep guard in the Narrow Seas till the discovery of Babington's plot so disgusted Philip that he abandoned all plans connected therewith, and fell again to strengthening his Armada. But Drake in success had learned strategy, and could now advise the Queen that the best defence would be one made on the enemy's coast. Elizabeth was convinced, and Drake, to his own and the nation's joy, was made the Queen's admiral and placed at the head of twenty-three sail wherewith to wreck the Armada in its own ports. He knew Elizabeth's varying moods, and sailed at once. Well it was he did so, for within a few hours of his leaving Plymouth a messenger arrived to bid him confine his attentions to open waters.

The fleet's rendezvous was Cape St. Vincent, whence, in pursuance of Drake's information, it went direct to Cadiz, where lay a large fleet, chiefly of store-ships and transports. On the 19th April, 1587, Drake came off the port, and to the alarm of his vice-admiral, John Burough, attacked at once. In the outer harbour the six Queen's ships beat off the galleys of the port, while the armed merchantmen ran amuck among the store-ships. All night the destruction went on, and on the next day, in spite of the difficulties of the passage and the absence of pilots, in spite of the Spanish batteries and galleys, the fleet passed on to the inner harbour, there to destroy the heaviest and finest ships, which had escaped thither on the 19th. The success was colossal: twelve thousand tons of shipping were given to the flames, four victuallers were carried out, and, in spite of persistent attacks from the galleys, the English fleet was unhurt. Drake now resolved to take the forts at Cape St. Vincent, and from that anchorage to dominate the trade of the coast. Again Burough differed from him, but the Admiral turned angrily and ordered his arrest. Doubtless he suspected in his cautiousness another Doughty, though in truth Burough was sincerely alarmed at Drake's violation of all rules of scientific warfare. Drake

was justified in his opinion by the capture of the forts and the sweeping of the coast. Lisbon was insulted, but Santa Cruz would not come out, so Drake resolved to waylay the plate fleets at the Azores. A heavy gale dispersed the fleet and brought the plan to nought, but on the 9th June such ships as remained with the Admiral had the good fortune to capture the *San Felipe*, a huge carrack in the East Indian trade. The money value of this prize was a million sterling, but over and above this it first drew the eyes of English merchants to the riches of the East. The King of Spain's beard was singed with a vengeance, and the Armada did not sail that year.

It is hard for us nowadays to understand how terribly Philip's prestige appealed to Englishmen: we can grasp more readily the truth that Drake's name, as a set-off thereto, was one to conjure with, the bugbear of priests and children, and the utter despair of king and nobles. The work of the previous year had scotched the snake, and though Elizabeth may have believed it killed, Drake was under no delusion. Again and again he begged leave for a further raid on the Spanish coast, and though at last he was sent to the southward with Lord Howard of Effingham, the Lord High Admiral, the wind turned against him and it was too late. So when, after divers false alarms, the Armada came into the Channel, it did so without striking a blow. Seymour was off the Dutch coast, the western fleet was at Plymouth; and as the Armada passed up with a fair wind to join hands with Parma, the English fleet lay under its lee. To Drake the position looked critical, but the ships got to sea in good order, and in the night weathered on the Spanish fleet. From here up Channel they hung doggedly on the enemy's heels, making no general attack, but molesting him continually and cutting off the stragglers. On the night of the 21st July the vice-admiral was leading the fleet with a lantern on his poop. Seeing some suspicious craft passing to windward, he put out the light and hauled his wind, only to find that they were peaceful traders. But when day broke, he found disabled, far astern of her friends and near himself, no less a bait than the *Rosario*, flagship of Pedro de Valdes. In an instant the

Revenge was alongside. The Spaniard would have held out for terms, but, "I am Francis Drake!" shouted the vice-admiral, "and my matches are burning," after which a prize crew took the big ship to Dartmouth.

How the Armada, hustled to leeward of each port, came dismayed to Calais; how it was dislodged by fire-ships, how on the 29th July England's *Salamis* was fought at Gravelines, and how the fugitives were driven north does not belong particularly to Drake's history. Drake was not in chief command; but he bore a large part in the running fight up Channel, and would have done even more if he and his fellow-captains had been better supplied by the Government with powder. He was present in council with the Commander-in-Chief Howard, Seymour, Hawkins, and Frobisher, when it was arranged to send fire-ships into Calais; he took part in the fight off Gravelines, and he joined in the pursuit up the North Sea until lack of powder, coupled with the feeling that wind and rocks might do the rest of the work of destruction, caused the pursuers to turn southward again.

Following the disappearance of the Armada, Drake would again be up and doing. He would achieve a counter stroke at Lisbon in the interests of Don Antonio, and he would see that Spain had no shipping left. With difficulty the Queen was induced to contribute £20,000, and in 1589 a fleet of 180 sail was ready for Drake and Norreys. Drake's commission was not as open as he desired; he was bound to an attack on the Biscayan ports. At Corunna he failed to find the shipping he expected, but occupied the low town; and, though beaten off with heavy loss from the upper city, Norreys achieved a great land victory at El Burgo. Leaving the Groyne, the expedition went to Peniche, there to land Norreys with 1000 men for an attack on Lisbon. The fleet went round to Cascaes, which was taken, and would have entered the Tagus; but before the wind came fair the troops fell back on the ships, defeated not by the enemy, but by the utter listlessness of their professed allies the Portuguese. Nothing remained but to try for the Plate Fleet at the Azores, but plague had so weakened them, and a succession of heavy

gales so scattered the fleet, that this last hope had to be abandoned. The failure was not Drake's fault, but it was complete, and of his evil luck he reaped the bitter fruit.

For long he lay under a ban neglected, and the war sank at once from a heroic level to mere commerce destruction. Drake, however, was not idle. He sat in Parliament, and he busied himself in improvements at Plymouth, to which "Drake's Leet," carrying water to the town from the Dartmoor hills, still bears witness. At length in the summer of 1594 he gained leave for one more West Indian raid.

Once more he was the victim of delays and changes of plan, but in July, 1595, put to sea on his last voyage. We can see now what Drake saw not then, that the time was past for these raids; the Spanish colonies were well warned and fortified, while his own force lost in speed what it gained in strength. With Drake on this ill-omened attempt sailed old John Hawkins, and, in command of the soldiers, Sir Thomas Baskerville. It would be dreary to follow in detail the round of heroic failure. From the Canaries they sailed to San Juan de Porto Rico; but so strong was the town and so well warned the inmates that Drake had to draw off utterly discomfited, dispirited in addition by the death of Hawkins. Drake tried again the scenes of his youth; Rio Hacha, Santa Marta, and Nombre in turn were occupied, but no treasure was found, and Panama had been so greatly strengthened that Baskerville, with 750 men, was driven back from before it. Drake saw a last hope in surprising Truxillo or the towns on Lake Nicaragua, but the hand of God was against him. He was driven by a heavy gale to shelter behind the pestilent island known as the Shield of Veragua, and here, worn out with toil and disappointment, he fell a ready victim to the dysentery which closed his life on the 28th January, 1596.

Such was the tragic end of that great man; but though his life closed in gloom his work lived on. His greatness was that he had stepped where others had feared to tread; he first, by proving the true value of the fabled might of Spain, had led up to that series of victories which changed the history of the civilised world.



Lo. B. Glan

From an Engraving in the possession of William Blake, Esq.

III.

ROBERT BLAKE, ADMIRAL AND GENERAL-AT-SEA.

BY CAPTAIN AND HON. MAJOR E. J. BLAKE,
2nd V.B. SOMERSET L.I.

ROBERT BLAKE, the subject of this memoir, was born at Bridgwater, Somerset, in the year 1599.

Bridgwater lies on the banks of the River Parret, some eight or ten miles from the Bristol Channel. At the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries it was a considerable port, and, like many other towns in the West of England at that time, was of much importance, while Liverpool, Manchester, and Hull were hardly known. Robert Blake's father and grandfather were merchants living in Bridgwater, owning many ships that traded to all parts of the world. Tradition says that it was a ship of the admiral's grandfather that first brought intelligence to England of the approach of the Spanish Armada to the English Channel. The Bridgwater Blakes were also landowners, and were descended from Mr. Humphry Blake, Lord of the Manor of Plainsfield in Over-Stowey, a parish lying at the foot of the Quantock Hills, about eight miles from Bridgwater. Robert Blake was educated at the Grammar School at Bridgwater, and from there, at the age of about seventeen years, he went to Oxford, where he remained until 1625, when the death of his father, which occurred in that year, caused him to leave the University and to return home. While at Oxford he took his degree, and was also a competitor for a scholarship and a fellowship, in neither of which, however, was he successful.

In February, 1649, a commission was issued to Colonel Popham, Colonel Blake, and Colonel Deane, or any two of them, to be admirals and generals of the fleet then at sea. These officers were to rank in the order in which their names were written in the commission ; so that Blake, without any special training, began his naval career as the second in command of the National Fleet. His first services were in the English and Irish Channels, where he and Deane were employed in putting down piracy, which was being carried on by Prince Rupert from the Scilly and Channel Islands, and also from Kinsale, where Rupert was blockaded for some time. In December, 1649, Blake was chosen to command alone on the coast of Portugal, whither Rupert had fled ; and during these winter months he was busy fitting out his squadron for sea, and in the following February he sailed with fourteen ships.

In January, 1650, the Council of State issued the following "additional instructions for the generals of the fleet for the Southern Expedition," namely—

"This present fleet is sent forth for the intents following, viz. the suppressing of pirates, advantage of trade, encouraging of merchants, and securing their shipping at sea ; also to pursue, seize, scatter, fight with, or destroy all the ships of the revolted fleet."

Blake was directed to strike hard at Rupert and at any other power which allowed him to use its harbours, and he was also ordered to insist on the salute due to the sovereign of the seas ; namely, that all foreign ships should lower their topsails to the flag of England.

Early in March Blake arrived at his cruising-ground off Lisbon, and there he remained until nearly the end of the year. Rupert's squadron was lying within the Tagus, under the guns of the Portuguese forts. As Blake's orders were not to tolerate even tacit neutrality, he impressed those of the Brazil outgoing vessels that were of English nationality for the service of the Commonwealth, and the Portuguese cargoes were sequestered. This was only a warning to the King of Portugal : later on he destroyed the greater part of the Brazil home-coming fleet. This convinced Portugal

that it was better to quarrel with Rupert than with the masters of England, and the king either forced or bribed Rupert to leave the Tagus. He escaped through the Straits of Gibraltar to the Mediterranean, where Blake came up with him at Carthage in November, 1650, and captured or destroyed the bulk of the squadron.

Before leaving the Mediterranean Blake taught a lesson to the French nation. The latter had, during the year 1650, committed many acts of piracy on English traders in the Mediterranean, and were also suspected of an intention to help Rupert. Blake, therefore, knowing that he would be supported at home in his action, even if he did not act by express orders, captured four French vessels by way of reprisal, and the French Government was left to digest this warning.

In February, 1651, Blake returned to England, after having been at sea for a year, which was a considerable feat in the seventeenth century, when it was hardly thought possible to keep the sea with a squadron of large ships in winter. He was accorded the thanks of Parliament, and was also voted £1000 for his services.

However, he was not allowed much rest, for in March of the same year he was selected to command the fleet in the Irish Seas, and in April he received sudden orders to reduce the Scilly Isles, where Sir John Grenvil still held out for the king. Grenvil had been capturing Dutch vessels as well as English, and it was rumoured that Tromp and the Dutch fleet were on their way to seek redress against Grenvil, and perhaps also to seize Scilly as a fortified post at the mouth of the Channel. Blake's orders were, in effect, to blow the Dutchmen out of the water if they came too near Scilly; but Tromp kept at a respectful distance, and Scilly was reduced by Blake in May.

Soon after this, owing to the death of Popham, Blake hoisted his flag in the *Victory*, and took his station in the Downs. Here he remained for a time on the look-out, to use his own phrase employed at another time, to "keep foreigners from fooling us."

In October of the same year Blake was sent in command

of the squadron despatched to reduce Jersey, held by Sir George Carteret for the king, and here also there was considered to be, as in the case of Scilly, a danger of Dutch intervention. Carteret retired to Elizabeth Castle, but at the end of 1651 he surrendered, and Jersey passed under the control of the Parliament. For a few weeks now Blake had rest from the incessant cruising in which he had spent nearly two years; but on the 25th February, 1652, his command of the fleet was renewed for nine months.

Since the death of Popham, Blake had become the leading man in maritime affairs, and one of the foremost Englishmen of his time. The almost absolute power given him over the dockyards shows what confidence was felt in his administrative faculty. In May he received another proof of the trust imposed in him by the Council of State, blank commissions being sent to him, in the Downs, to be filled up by him (after consulting with two others) with names of the officers he preferred to have under him as vice and rear-admirals.

Early in 1652 the differences which had been growing for some years between England and Holland, and which had gradually been coming to a crisis, broke out into open war; and now began a naval struggle between the two greatest maritime powers of the time, which did not terminate until Holland was defeated and England acknowledged as the Mistress of the Seas. The Navigation Act of 1651, which interfered with the Dutch carrying trade was a main cause; but there were others. There was a long-standing dispute as to the right of fishing off the English coasts; and, above all, there was the difference between the two countries as to the right of England to insist, in the narrow seas, upon her flag being saluted by all nations, which act of submission had been claimed and received even by a single cruiser from strong squadrons.

In May, 1652, Tromp, the veteran Dutch admiral, who had been brought up to the sea from his boyhood, was cruising with a fleet of about forty sail in the Channel, and Blake was lying in Dover Roads in command of fifteen sail, while eight more were at anchor in the Downs under Bourne. On the

19th May, Tromp, who was making for Calais from the north, was met by Captain Van Saanen, who brought him important news or orders, in consequence of which Tromp caused the Dutch fleet to change its direction, and bore down on Blake. The change of course of the fleet after the meeting with Van Saanen was seen from the English ships, where it was at once supposed that Tromp had received orders from Holland to attack them.

In their accounts of what followed each admiral accuses the other of being the aggressor. Guns were fired from both flagships as they neared each other, which were said to be signals by one side, and were received as insults by the other. Then the broadside of the Dutch flagship *Brederode* crashed into the English admiral's ship, and that particular contest, and also one of the greatest, if not the greatest, naval struggle which England has ever entered on, began in earnest. For some time the brunt of the battle fell on Blake's flagship, the *James*, which had outsailed the rest of the squadron. The *James* suffered severely; her master was killed, and some fifty of her men were also killed and wounded. Before dark her mainmast had gone over her side, and she had been very much hit about in hull and rigging. The rest of the squadron had, however, come up; and Bourne also, who had heard the firing from the Downs, was in time to fall on the rear of the Dutch fleet, and cut off two of their ships. Soon afterwards the Dutch gave up the attempt of forcing the Straits, and made for the Flemish coast, leaving the two prizes in the hands of the English. The two fleets were in sight of each other the next day, but did not renew the contest.

Tromp retired to the Texel, and the English returned to Dover, towing their dismasted flagship. As the result of this battle, where the Dutch were about two to one, they had to return to Holland, while Blake put back to Dover, the station off which he had been attacked. The Dutch fleet, being thus prevented from entering the English Channel, left it open to the English to intercept the home-coming richly laden Dutch merchantmen, numbers of which were captured in the next few weeks and sent as prizes into the Thames.

In the last days of June, Blake sailed north with a large fleet of forty sail to clear the English and Scotch coasts of the Dutch fishing fleets, the fishing in these waters by the Dutch, in large fleets protected by ships of war, being, as was said above, one of the long-standing grievances between the two countries.

The object of the English fleet was completely effected, and the English waters cleared of all Dutch vessels. Meanwhile Tromp appeared in the Straits from the Texel with 100 sail, and there found Sir George Ascue with only fourteen sail. The latter at once took refuge under the guns of Dover Castle, and Tromp, declining such a contest, sailed to the northwards in search of Blake. The Dutch fleet, however, encountered terrible gales, which scattered the ships and drove them back to their own coast, whilst their opponents managed to ride out the gales in safety, under shelter of the Shetland Isles.

Blake's next enterprise was against the French, who were then at war with Spain. England was not in alliance with Spain nor at war with France, but as the latter had harboured enemies of the Commonwealth, and interfered with British trade, it was decided to teach her a lesson. Blake, therefore, had orders to fall on Vendome's squadron of eight ships, which was proceeding to relieve Dunkirk. This he did in Calais Roads, and made short work of it.

In September, 1652, the Dutch, under De Witt and De Ruyter, who had superseded Tromp in command of their fleet, appeared off the English coast. On the 28th September, Blake, in the *Resolution*, of sixty guns, with a fleet of between fifty and sixty sail, sighted the enemy off the North Foreland, and about four o'clock in the afternoon bore down on them, leading the way between the Dutch fleet (which was lying under the lee of the Goodwins) and those dangerous sands.

The *Resolution* was followed by the rest of the English fleet, and the action became general. The flagship and three or four more of the leading ships went aground, but soon got off again, and these mishaps acted as a warning to the rest of the fleet to keep clear of the sands.

Blake's orders were to waste no powder at long bowls,

but to come to close quarters, and these orders were well obeyed.

The Dutch fired to dismast the English ships, while the English guns were mainly directed against the hulls of the enemy, and the results were most disastrous to the Dutch. Our loss in men was small, and not a single one of our ships was sunk or totally disabled, while the enemy lost several ships sunk, and others were completely put out of action.

The fight ended as evening came on, and it was believed in the English fleet that if the combatants had not been then parted the Dutch would have been completely annihilated.

The wind having changed, the Dutch, on the 30th September, regained their harbours, and could not be brought to an action by Blake, who, therefore, returned home.

It was thought in England by the Council of State that there would be no more fighting, as it was so late in the year, and the fleet under Blake in the Downs was consequently weakened in order that convoys might be sent to the north to escort the Newcastle colliers to London, and also to bring home safely the naval stores expected from Scandinavia. The ships in need of repairs had also been docked, and Blake, in the *Triumph*, had only forty-two sail with him when, on the 29th November, Tromp (who was now reinstated in command of the Dutch fleet) appeared off the Goodwins with ninety sail.

Although the Dutch were more than two to one, and only half of Blake's ships had their full number of men on board, he nevertheless determined to fight. The fight began about midday on the 30th November, off Dungeness, and lasted till dark. The English were defeated, the odds being so great against them; but it was nearly as good as a victory, and the Dutch had not very much to be proud of.

Blake, in the *Triumph*, with the *Victory* and *Vanguard*, was engaged for some time with twenty of the enemy's ships until assistance came to them. There are many gallant episodes connected with this battle. One of the English captains, who was hard pressed, blew up his ship, and with it many Dutchmen who had successfully boarded it. When

darkness came Blake retreated to the Thames, having lost five ships, three of them being sunk.

It was after this battle that Tromp hoisted his famous broom, and sailed down the Channel.

Englishmen, however, had no reason to be ashamed of the result of the fight, and Blake was thanked for his services by the Council of State, who at once set to work to equip and man a fleet strong enough to contend with Tromp and his ninety or 100 sail.

By the beginning of February, 1653, the English fleet of seventy sail under Blake, Deane, and Monk, with Penn and Lawson, was ready, lying off Portland, and Tromp was soon seen coming up the Channel with a large convoy of over 150 merchantmen under his protection. His battleships were between the convoy and the English, and the wind was in his favour. Blake, on the *Triumph*, had only one squadron with him, the White and Blue being far from him, but he nevertheless determined to engage at once, despite Tromp's superiority. Deane was on board with Blake, and, supported by about a dozen ships, they fought the Dutch from eight o'clock in the morning for several hours before help arrived. The English ships suffered severely. On board the *Triumph* 100 men fell, the captain and the admiral's secretary being killed on deck. Blake himself was wounded in the thigh by a splinter.

"But though the *Triumph's* masts were down or going over her side, though her crew was thinned and hull shattered, her flag was still flying when Penn, Lawson, and Monk did at last struggle up against the wind into the line of battle. The last hours of daylight were spent in a general engagement, and when darkness came on the fleets separated, Tromp to look after his convoy, and the English to watch him."

The two fleets kept up the Channel during the night, and on the following and the next days the fight was renewed as fiercely as on the first day. Several of the Dutch men-of-war were sunk or taken, and about fifty of the merchantmen captured, but the rest of the convoy and his fleet Tromp took into the Texel.

After this three days' battle Blake had to retire from

active service in consequence of his wound, and he lay seriously ill at Portsmouth for some time. The wounded of the fleet were miserably looked after, there being no hospitals or medical organisation, and hundreds of men consequently died.

Towards the end of May Blake returned to active service, and took command of the ships fitting out in the Thames ; but the fleet at sea was led by Monk and Deane. On the 2nd June these admirals defeated Tromp off the Gable, and on the 3rd June Blake joined in the pursuit along the coast of Flanders. This was the last battle in which he took part against the Dutch. His illness had only been half-cured, and he was again compelled to retire from active service.

After recruiting his health Blake was active as one of the Commissioners of the Navy in looking into the administration of the dockyards, and in 1654 he was again in the Channel protecting English merchant ships from the privateers of Dunkerque and St. Malo. Early in 1655 Blake was in the Mediterranean with twenty-five sail, when he forced the Duke of Tuscany and the Pope to pay large sums of money as a satisfaction for injuries done to the Commonwealth. In March he was off Algiers, and then at Tunis, trying to make terms with the deys of those places for the injuries done to the English traders in the Mediterranean by the Algerine pirates. The Dey of Tunis would enter into no negotiations with Blake, and defied the latter to do his worst. The dey anchored his nine war-vessels in front of the fortress of Porto Ferino, a strong fort close to Tunis. On the 4th April, 1655, Blake, in the *George*, entered the Bay of Tunis with his fleet in two squadrons, and began a furious cannonade against the ships and forts, and in the course of a few hours the ships were all in flames and the forts destroyed. The result of this bombardment was that the Barbary States came to terms with the English, and captives were released on payment of a moderate ransom, and promises made not to harass English traders in future.

This cruise of Blake round the Mediterranean was one of the most important in the history of the English Navy, and

marked the end of the period in which our merchant ships were expected to take care of themselves. He had insisted on a settlement of old accounts, and let princes and pirates see the force that Great Britain could and would bring against those who did not respect her. It was on his way home that an event occurred which gave rise to one of the best-known stories about him. The fleet had put in at Malaga, in Spain, and while some of the sailors were on shore one of them gave offence to a priest in a Catholic procession, who urged the bystanders to ill-treat the Englishman. The latter, on returning to the fleet, complained to the admiral, who thereupon made a demand that the priest should be sent on board his flagship; this was only done after Blake had threatened to bombard the town if it was not complied with. When the priest arrived on board the *George*, Blake, having rebuked him, said that the act of submission was enough, and he would now let him go, but "he would have him and the whole world know that none but an Englishman should chastise an Englishman."

In September, 1655, Blake returned to England, and in the following March he left Tor Bay with a fleet of forty sail, Montague being his second in command.

From this time until his death in September of the following year he was cruising off the coast of Spain and in the adjoining seas, watching for the Spanish Plate Fleet on its return from America and the West Indies. War had now been declared openly against Spain, not only in the Indies, but in Europe, and Blake had orders to take and destroy the Spanish ships. It must be remembered that at this time England had not a single port or stronghold in the Mediterranean; there was no Gibraltar and no Malta, and hardly a friendly port where her ships could obtain fresh water and bread. After much negotiation by the English ambassador, and finally by the presence of the English fleet off Lisbon, the King of Portugal paid the £50,000 indemnity demanded for the sale by Prince Maurice of English ships at Lisbon, and the harbouring of the enemies of the Commonwealth. After this settlement of old scores, a firm alliance was made between

England and Portugal, and Blake was thus enabled to use the Portuguese harbours.

The English fleet now entered on a thorough blockade of the Spanish ports, with the view of preventing the Plate Fleet from entering them, and Spanish men-of-war leaving port to escort them home.

Nothing of importance occurred during the summer, and in September, 1656, Montague was ordered home, while Blake was to remain with twenty ships.

Before Montague left, however, the Plate ships came to Europe, and on the 9th September the eight large galleons under the Marquis of Badajoz were attacked by Captain Stayner in the *Speaker*, supported by two other ships.

It is said that one or two of the treasure-ships escaped, but certainly the greater part were captured or destroyed. The actual bullion found on board amounted to £600,000, besides much other valuable cargo.

Montague returned with the treasure to Portsmouth, whence it was sent to London in waggons, while Blake remained off the Spanish coast still to keep watch for the remainder of the home-coming Plate Fleet. Early in 1657, probably the end of March, he had news that sixteen treasure-ships were in the harbour of Santa Cruz, in the island of Teneriffe. The Spanish admiral had no doubt heard that the English fleet was cruising off the coast of Spain, and he thought he would wait under the guns and fortifications of Santa Cruz for a safe opportunity to complete his voyage. Santa Cruz is a deep and narrow-mouthed bay, with a formidable castle built at the entrance, and with a chain of forts round the shore, all armed, in 1657, with the heaviest ordnance then in use. With their men-of-war anchored under the guns of the forts, it was thought by the Spaniards, and with reason, that the place was practically safe from attack by a fleet. Story says that a Dutch captain in the harbour declined to accept this view when he heard that Blake was on his way there, and asked permission of the Spanish admiral to retire with his ship. Don Diego Diagues, relying on the strength of his position, smiled at the Dutchman's fears, and acceded to

his request, saying, "Go if you will, and let Blake come if he dare."

On the morning of the 20th April, 1657, Blake reached the bay, and at once stood in under a press of sail. Stayner led the van, and had orders to attack the galleons, while Blake directed the attack on the castles.

For four hours the battle raged fiercely, and then the galleons struck one after another. The English boarded, and drove the Spaniards out either to swim ashore or drown, and it being found impossible to bring out the big vessels, orders were given to fire them; this was done. The smaller vessels were also fired, and as the tide turned our fleet passed safely out through the narrow entrance, leaving the whole of the Spanish treasure-ships blazing in the harbour. With a favourable wind Blake soon regained his station off Cadiz, having, in his short absence, sunk the ships and shattered the forts with only a trifling loss (less than 200 men) to his own fleet; but the loss to the Spaniards was said to have been tremendous.

Blake wrote in his despatches about the action as follows:—

"We resolved to attack them, though they were close along the shore, which was lined with musketeers, and commanded by the castle and six or seven forts. Yet in four hours they were beaten, and all the ships driven on shore, except the admiral's and vice-admiral's, which resisted most; but by 2 p.m. one was fired and the other blew up, and by evening all the rest were fired except two that were sunk. . . .

"To complete the mercy, our own ships got off well, though some were maimed, and had to be warped off; and the wind blew right into the bay, and the forts and castle continued to play upon us.

"We had only fifty slain and 120 wounded. . . .

"To God be all the glory."

The news of this astounding victory startled the world, and Clarendon wrote of it—

"The whole action was so miraculous that all men who knew the place wondered that any sober man with what courage soever endured would ever have undertaken it, and they could hardly persuade themselves to believe what they had done, whilst the Spaniards comforted themselves with the belief that they were devils and not men who had destroyed them in such a manner."

It will be recollected with interest that at Santa Cruz Nelson lost his arm in an unsuccessful night attempt to capture the place with an armed force in boats.

On his return to Cadiz, Blake's health grew rapidly worse, and after an expedition against the pirates of Sallee, when he forced terms on them and liberated many Christian captives, in August, 1657, he at last received orders to take his fleet home. It is said that he was very anxious to see again his native town, but this was not to be, as he died on board the *George* two hours before reaching Plymouth Sound. The country and Government paid all honour to the dead hero by according him a public funeral in Westminster Abbey in Henry VII.'s Chapel. A few years later, after the Restoration, the body was removed from its resting-place in the Abbey; but whether it was then buried in the precincts of the neighbouring St. Margaret's Church or handed over to his family for interment elsewhere is uncertain.

Blake's services to the State were not productive of wealth to him, as he was not one of those who acquired fortunes out of the wealth captured from his country's enemies. He, indeed, died possessed of scarcely more than the modest fortune that he had derived from his father.

Clarendon's portrait of him may be quoted. He says—

“He was the first man that declined the old track, and made it manifest that the science might be attained in less time than it was imagined, and deposed those rules which had been long in practice, to keep his ship and his men out of danger, which had been held in former times a point of great ability and circumspection, as if the principal art requisite in the captain of a ship had been to be sure to come home safe again. He was the first man who brought the ships to contemn castles on shore, which had been thought ever very formidable, and were discovered by him to make a noise only, and to fright those who could rarely be hurt by them. He was the first that infused that proportion of courage into the seamen, by making them see by experience what mighty things they could do if they were resolved, and taught them to fight in fire as well as upon water, and though he hath been very well imitated and followed, he was the first that gave the Example of that kind of naval courage and bold and resolute achievements.”

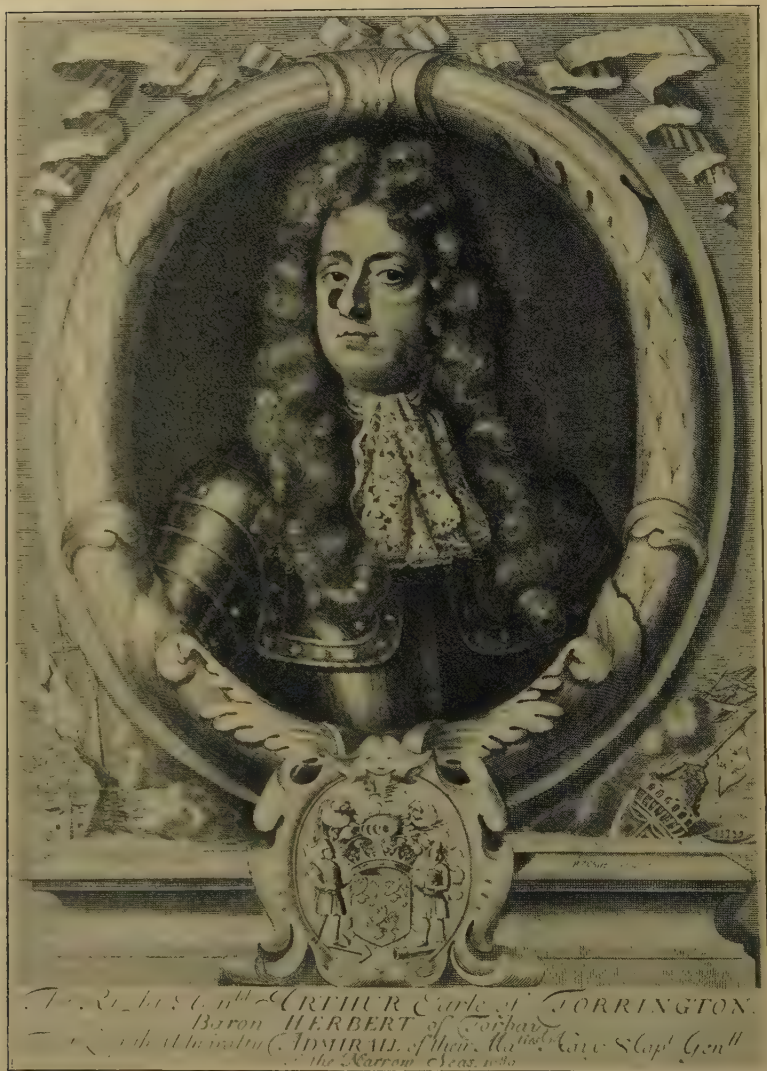
Another writer says—

“When Campbell linked the name of Blake with Nelson's, he did more

than consult the exigencies of his metre. The two are very fit to be named together, for as the one did the very utmost that could be done with the old sailing fleet, and can never have a rival, the other was the first of the modern admirals."

It may be mentioned here that in 1888 a very handsome stained-glass window was placed in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, to the memory of Blake, and that this was unveiled by Lord Charles Beresford. A window was soon after erected in the parish church at Plymouth to his memory. At the present time active steps are being taken, in his native town of Bridgwater, to erect there a statue worthy of him, and it is confidently anticipated that this will be accomplished before the end of the present year, the tercentenary of Blake's birth. The oldest monument to him is the marble bust in the Shire Hall at Taunton, placed there in 1860.

In writing this memoir I have made no original investigation, but have compiled it from the following works, namely: 'The History and Life of Robert Blake, Esq., of Bridgwater, written by a gentleman bred in his family;' Hepworth Dixon's 'Life;' D. Hannay's little work; and Professor Montagu Burrows' lecture, published in the Somersetshire Archæological Proceedings for 1897; to all which works and writers I am very much indebted.



Torrington

(The mark on the face is a wound received in combat with Algerine pirates.)

IV.

ARTHUR HERBERT, EARL OF TORRINGTON.

BY VICE-ADMIRAL P. H. COLOMB.

UNTIL the year 1891 the subject of this sketch was chiefly known as the loser of the battle of Beachy Head, and as the object of Macaulay's scurrilous and vituperative abuse. Since that year, owing to the reproduction of the admiral's letters and utterances regarding the battle, Lord Torrington is best known as the enunciator of a great principle in naval strategy, and as the coiner of a phrase—"The Fleet in Being"—round which controversy has for several years hotly raged.

As the view which we may take of his intelligence, and of his conduct before, at, and after the battle at Beachy Head will in some degree depend upon the view we may take of the man himself, it is material to the issue to examine, and, if necessary, to correct, what Macaulay has said of him. I think I can show that the historian has sacrificed truth to style, to rhetoric, and to dramatic effect; and that he has grossly perverted the materials before him to suit the purposes of the moment. So far as I can judge, he assumed, without any examination, that the Naval Campaign of 1690 was disgraceful to Torrington, and from that position worked back to the assumption that he was a disgrace to humanity, and far below the worst of his contemporaries in morals, in judgment, and in public conduct. When, therefore, he found any contemporary writings which opposed this view, he ignored them or perverted them, so that his theory might not suffer. But so carried away was he by his rhetoric, that he scarcely paused a moment

to explain how it was that, according to him, the finest qualities and the lowest character were combined in the same man, who shared the confidence of two successive, but characteristically opposite, Sovereigns of Great Britain.

Macaulay turns the vials of his wrath upon him as a corrupt and totally inefficient administrator when he was First Lord of the Admiralty. There is good evidence that, at least in cases, corruption was rife in the Naval Administration in the early days of William, when Torrington was First Lord of the Admiralty, but it is as certain that corruption did not cease with Torrington's tenure of office as it is certain that Torrington was in no way responsible for it in his own time. In days long gone by I was a student of the records kept in Devonport Dockyard from its foundation in 1691, and nothing could exceed the corruption in all ranks disclosed in them. But it was more than careless, it was wilful on Macaulay's part to connect Torrington with the corruption of his time on the evidence before him.

Torrington, then Admiral Herbert, became First Lord of the Admiralty on the 5th March, 1689. On the 17th he went down to Portsmouth and took command of the fleet at Spithead. Before the 26th he was at sea. He returned to Plymouth on the 7th May, and reached Spithead about the 12th, and, going to town about the 17th, was back again with the fleet on or before the 3rd June. Until the 2nd October he was cruising, or blockading Brest, with returns to Torbay for provisions, in what was the usual way in later years. The inquiry into the corruption in Naval Administration, on which Macaulay chiefly bases his charge against Torrington, began in the House of Commons on the 13th November. Macaulay says, speaking of the punishments awarded to such as were convicted of malpractices: "But no censure was passed on the chief offender, Torrington." How could censure be passed on the man who was at sea, for the ill-doings of the home administration?

To clinch his false hypothesis, Macaulay declares that Torrington was dismissed from his post, whereas the historian had it under Torrington's own hand, corroborated by quite

independent evidence, that he asked and obtained leave from the king to resign his office, because he did not see "matters go so well at the Admiralty as he thought the Service required, and that it was not in his power to prevent it." The admiral was out of office before the end of December, and later was threatening to refuse the command of the fleet because the Government would not take heed to his warnings about the designs of the French.

So much for this baseless assault on the public character of a distinguished sailor. Macaulay makes a more violent attack on his private character. I have been at some pains to follow up his references, and I think I can clearly show that the sense of them is grossly perverted and exaggerated, if not falsified, in order to provide material for a rhetorical display. "No man could be more unfit for his post. . . . His morals had always been loose. . . . The nerves of his mind, which had been for a short time braced to a firm tone, were now so much relaxed by vice that he was utterly incapable of self-denial or of strenuous exertion. . . . Month after month the fleet, which should have been the terror of the seas, lay in harbour, while he was diverting himself in London. The sailors, punning upon his new title, gave him the name of Lord Tarry-in-town. When he came on ship-board he was accompanied by a bevy of courtesans. There was scarcely an hour of the day or of the night when he was not under the influence of claret. . . . He had long been in the habit of exacting the most abject homage from those who were under his command. His flagship was a little Versailles. He expected his captains to attend him to his cabin when he went to bed, and to assemble every morning at his levee. He even suffered them to dress him. One of them combed his flowing wig; another stood ready with the embroidered coat. Under such a chief there could be no discipline. His tars passed their time in rioting amongst the rabble at Portsmouth. Those officers who won his favour by servility and adulation easily obtained leave of absence, and spent weeks in London. . . ."

Now, in the generally low state of manners and morals

of the time we do not expect to find an angel in the First Lord of the Admiralty and Commander of the Fleet, even though we admit that he did one splendid thing, and was a sailor of long and active service who had suffered many wounds. But the man described is the worst of his kind—degraded, useless, and immoral to an extent that sinks him fathoms below his contemporaries. The least we can expect from a writer who poses as a historian is that he should justify his words. This Macaulay does not do. It is to be strongly suspected that he could not do it, for the worst things that he says come from the passages he has cited, and they do not justify the language.

I have given the dates within which Torrington's fleet spent its time in harbour and at sea, from the date of his appointment to command it until "the great ships" came in for their regular winter refit, and Torrington took up his duties at the Admiralty. Where is the "month after month" during which the fleet might have been at sea, but was not? Where was the opportunity for the "tars to revel at Portsmouth," or for the officers to spend "weeks in London"? The whole matter is simply this. When, in May, 1690, the spring fleet was assembling in the Downs, it was popularly thought—and even the queen shared in the idea—that Torrington was late in joining it. Torrington himself thought the same, and prayed to be allowed to go down, even without orders. But the Government refused to let him leave London until his orders were signed. They were not signed until the 26th May; they were not delivered to him till the 29th May; but he went down the Thames in a yacht next morning, and was on board his flagship the same night. The nickname of "Lord Tarry-in-town" arose out of only this particular case. It was not the sailors' invention, but that of a nameless and scurrilous pamphleteer, writing after the defeat of Beachy Head had turned the gall of the penny-a-liners upon him.

The charge of drunkenness is based first on a report communicated to Pepys chiefly at second-hand, and recorded by him at Tangier in the year 1683, to the effect that Herbert's flagship was then a drunken one. This is corroborated by

a single couplet in Daniel Defoe's versified attack on most of the public men of his day (1702), which, under the title of "The Reformation of Manners," loses all force by the even flow of its atrocious scurrility. Torrington comes off better than most of his contemporaries, and is accused of but one vice in the couplet—

"Brave T—n, who revelled day and night,
And always kept himself too drunk to fight."

The courtesans on board his flagship, the little Versailles, also on board, all come from Pepys' Diary at Tangier, in 1683. Before that time, at Cadiz, there had been the same contention among the captains for the smuggling of silver on board, and obtaining the freight upon it for the transport home that existed forty or fifty years ago on the coasts of Mexico. Herbert, as Commander-in-Chief, had the regulating of the trade, and took his percentages, as the admiral in the Pacific took his. Having such favours to bestow, the idea was that the captains of the day would do anything to obtain them, and Pepys writes on the 17th October, 1683: "W. Hewer tells me of captains submitting to the meanest servility to Herbert when at Tangier, waiting his rising and going to bed, combing his periwig, putting on his coat, as the king is served, he having and keeping a house on shore, and his mistresses visited and attended one after another, as the king's are. To commanders that value themselves above tarpaulins, to attend to these mean things, as Wheeler particularly is said to do——!"

This is second, third, or fourth-hand gossip. Pepys only knew what Hewer told him, and Hewer knew nothing of himself, for even had it been true, it was all past and gone when he first came to Tangier. The story bears the usual exaggeration on the face of it, but at any rate, had it been true in every detail, it happened in a house abroad, eight years before Herbert hoisted his flag as Admiral-in-Chief, or First Lord of the Admiralty, and it gives no ground for supposing such practices ever took place on board ship.

A corroboration of statements as to Torrington's general

immorality is not cited by Macaulay. It is given by Burnet, who never lost the opportunity of vilifying the admiral. He records the endeavour of King James to induce Herbert, then high in his Majesty's councils, and a member of the House of Commons, to vote for the repeal of the Test Acts. On Herbert replying, at the certain risk of ruin, that his conscience would not allow him to do it, the king is represented as reproaching him with his evil life, and Herbert as replying "that he had his faults, but they were such that other people who talked more of conscience were guilty of the like." Yet it would seem the most unlikely thing in the world that any one should have been present at such an interview, and we must again claim the statement as mere gossip. Having thus arrived at a point that leaves Torrington not better or worse than the men of his time, we are free to consider his historical place without prejudice. Space does not allow of anything but the merest biographical note of his life, as we must devote ourselves to considering more fully those few months in it, from March, 1689, to July, 1690, within which his fame or his infamy is stored up.

Arthur Herbert was of good family. He seems to have gone to sea early, and to have served through the Dutch wars, being several times wounded. He was lieutenant of Sir John Kempthorne's ship at the great battle of St. James' Day in 1666, and was hotly engaged. In 1667 he was Captain of the *Pembroke*, and fought more than once by challenge in the Bay of Cadiz a Dutch ship of superior force to his own. During his homeward voyage with a squadron he had the rare misfortune to have his ship sunk under him by collision with the *Fairfax*. He appears to have been Flag-Captain in the *Cambridge* at the battle of Solebay, and when Sir Fretchville Hollis fell he succeeded to the command, and fought her desperately in that and the subsequent action off "the Oyster Bank," being himself severely wounded.

In 1678 he was second in command in the Mediterranean under Sir John Narborough. His flag was flying in the *Rupert*, and he fought and captured in her an Algerine ship of forty guns and 400 men, but he lost an eye in the action.

In May, 1679, Sir John Narborough's return to England left Herbert in command of the Mediterranean squadron, and in the same year, Tangier being invested by the Moors, Herbert landed his men, and heading them, more than once assisted in their defeat and in freeing the city. He sailed for Algiers in 1681, and, enforcing the release of the Dey's captives, concluded with him a treaty of which the advantages were wholly ours. The stories that Pepys tells of him are hardly congruous with his acts and his public reputation through these years.

After his return to England in 1682, Herbert was gazetted Rear-Admiral of England as a reward for his services in the Mediterranean, and became a Lord of the Admiralty. When James came to the throne, Herbert was made Vice-Admiral of England, was appointed Master of the Robes to the King, and was apparently one of the King's Naval Council. He was in high favour, and his various posts brought him in £4000 a year. He held a seat in the House of Commons.

When James began to move for the repeal of the Test Acts in order to clear the way for the return of the Roman Catholics to rule, he had made Herbert's brother Lord Chief Justice, because he was in favour of the dispensing power. The admiral took the opposite view, and, altogether declining to support the king, was, in February, 1687, turned out of all his places. He tried for leave, thereupon, to take service in the Venetian republic, but this being refused, he fled to Holland in July, and attached himself to the service of the Prince of Orange. There he met Burnet, apparently for the first time, and becoming necessarily the most important man in the counsels of the prince, raised in the heart of the ecclesiastic that rancour which he ever displayed towards him.

Herbert collected and arranged the prince's fleet, and commanded it under William during the crossing of the Channel and the landing in Torbay. He was, as already remarked, made First Lord of the Admiralty in March, 1689, but immediately took command of the Channel fleet, as Lord Anson, long after, did also. He sailed with but twelve ships of the line to oppose the French fleet under Châteaurenault of forty-four sail, twenty-eight of which were of the line. He

was soon reinforced, however, and before the end of April was at the head of eighteen sail of the line, two frigates, a fire-ship, and some small vessels. With this force he attacked Châteaurenault in Bantry Bay, but after using every effort to bring the French out into the open, where by management he might hope to equalise the attack and defence, he was foiled by the French admiral's determination to maintain his superior position in the Bay, and subsequently returned to Plymouth, where he landed his wounded. Then he went to Portsmouth, where he was visited by the king, who promised him an earldom, knighted his vice and rear admirals, and bestowed ten shillings a head on the ships' companies.

On the admiral's return to town he was thanked in his place in the House of Commons; and it is one of the irreconcilable contrasts between what is urged against him and what he did, that he—who was said to be hated by the seamen*—should have taken the opportunity in his reply to move for a Committee of the House to appropriate funds for the maintenance of the wounded seamen. He got his Committee at once, with himself in the Chair, and it may be perhaps admitted that this motion was the inception of Greenwich Hospital, and of our present pension for wounds system.

I have shown how, very soon after this, Torrington was at sea again with the fleet, not to return to port till October. Practically the fleet was then broken up, all but Berkely's squadron of lighter ships, which cruised till the end of the year, and then dispersed for the winter refit. Torrington naturally fell back into his duties as First Lord of the Admiralty. It seems all but certain that he must have filled the rôle of a reformer, and must have suffered for it, as St. Vincent afterwards did. It is quite certain that he had quarrelled with Nottingham, the Secretary of State, who had been First Lord of the Admiralty when Herbert was a member of the Board, in 1684. The quarrel—whatever else was at

* It is due to Macaulay to say that he describes Torrington as "much loved by his sailors" (vol. ii. p. 209); but it is hard to see how, in the face of this, he states that the opprobrious nickname was given by the sailors.

the back of it—was based on the difficulty of getting Nottingham to understand the power of the French Navy, and its possible strategy in the spring. At length the admiral could stand it no longer, and resigned, so that “since he could not prevent the mischief, he might have no share in the blame.” It is to be observed that one of the chief instances of malversation brought forward in the Commons, in November, was the scandalous condition of the victualling department. Torrington, from the fleet, must have felt the wrong more than any one else. It speaks volumes that within three weeks of his return to office new Commissioners of Victualling were appointed, and this before the House had taken note of the necessity for reform.

However all this may be, we have Torrington out of office as First Lord with the opening of 1690, but nominated for the command of the spring fleet, urging his successor, Lord Pembroke, and the Government, to prepare for the coming dangers; making little or no way, and going so far in April as to threaten to refuse the command of the fleet, and only being appeased by promises of amendment and the strengthening of his own hands.

It was perfectly well known then that the French had at least seventy sail available, though not all of them were at Brest. There was no pretence on our side of making adequate preparations, ministers being convinced, in full opposition to Torrington’s opinion, that the French would not show out in force. As the month of May wore on, though ships were constantly arriving and sailing from the ports of Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Falmouth, no squadron seems to have been appointed for the watching of Brest, though Killigrew, on a mixed mission, had a squadron in the Mediterranean: consisting of sixteen sail of the line, with orders to watch Châteaurenault’s division of the French fleet in Toulon, and if it passed the strait, to follow it. The French fleet did pass the strait, but Killigrew did not follow it at once, and it joined de Tourville at Brest without mishap.

Towards the end of May, then, the condition was that our main fleet, English and Dutch, was slowly assembling

in the Downs and at Plymouth and Portsmouth, to rendezvous at Spithead or St. Helens. Torrington was detained in town by order of Mary and her Council, which included Nottingham, Devonshire, Admiral Russell, and Pembroke, the First Lord of the Admiralty, all personally hostile to Torrington. Killigrew was dallying with his sixteen sail of the line at Cadiz; Cloudesley Shovel was in command of a squadron of six sail in the Irish Sea, and Captain Saunders, with another, was cruising ninety miles S.S.W. of Scilly.

Torrington, as we have seen, joined the fleet in the Downs on the 30th May; he brought all the ships he had to Portsmouth on the 19th June, and presently found himself at the head of some fifty sail, with twenty fire-ships, when, on the 23rd, he was suddenly informed that a French fleet, 120 strong, was at the back of the Isle of Wight. This fleet had, in fact been seen off Plymouth on the 20th, and 110 ships had been counted, but time had not permitted the Government to make the fact known to Torrington earlier than the 22nd. The latter at once weighed, but had to anchor again from the lightness of the wind. Next day he was reinforced by Dutch and English ships, and presently mustered fifty-five sail "fit to lie in a line." On the 25th there was manœuvring between the two fleets, and Torrington did all he could to bring on a battle, seeing his opportunity of doing so with advantage, but the French declined the offer. The English had been near enough to count the French, and made the number at least eighty sail of the line.

Torrington found himself in the position of being called on to defend the realm and the new dynasty with a fleet so inferior that by all reasonable rules of war, and by a practice confirmed by the subsequent action of our greatest admirals, he could not attack unless some unforeseen opportunity should promise success. It had never been part of his nature to decline action. Even Macaulay admits his personal gallantry; but the serious point with him was, that if with such odds against him he should be badly beaten, the French, with numbers of ships which in such an action would be hardly touched, would be able to convoy over and to support the

disembarkation of the land forces that every one understood would be quickly ready for the service. There was no military force in England to cope with such an invasion, for the bulk and the flower of the Army was with the king in Ireland. The dilemma was terrible for a man of Herbert's temperament, but he thought, and he proposed to act, precisely as Lord Howe did under far less pressing conditions ninety-two years afterwards. He proposed to decline a general action, to endeavour to work past the French to the westward, so as to pick up Killigrew on his return, and perhaps Cloudesley Shovel and Saunders. But, in any case, he proposed to keep himself in close observation of the French fleet, confident that it would be impossible for de Tourville to do any mischief so long as that was the case. But he was a little too ready with reproaches to the Government for placing him in such a position after his persistent warnings; and a little too extreme in detailing what might happen if he could not pass the French to the westward, and they pressed him to the eastward. Knowing whom and what he had to deal with in the Queen's Council, it was injudicious to report that he might be driven behind the Gunfleet for a time, until reinforcements there enabled him to face the French and drive them out of the Channel. The consequence was that his letter of the 26th June was misunderstood in Council, with possibly some wilfulness on the part of the four lords whom he reproached and offended. Nottingham, at least, still adhered to his opinion that the French were not in the force represented, and that there was no question of defeat. The Council assumed that Torrington was even then in full retreat to the Gunfleet, and orders were sent to him *viâ* Rye, and not *viâ* Portsmouth, as they would have been had his language been understood. He got them when his fleet was at anchor, on Sunday afternoon, the 29th June, about nine miles E.S.E. of Beachy Head, and the French fleet was under sail twelve or fifteen miles to the S.S.W., with the wind from north to N.N.E.

Torrington immediately called together his official Council of War—all the flag officers: Evertsen, Callenburg, and Van de Putten (Dutch); and Delaval, Ashby, and Rooke (English)

—to consider the queen's orders which the sloop from Rye had brought. The order positively forbade any retreat to the Gunfleet. "We choose rather," it said, "you should upon any advantage of the wind give battle to the enemy, rather than retreat further than is necessary to get an advantage upon the enemy." Going to the westward was left to his discretion ; "so as you by no means ever lose sight of the French fleet, whereby they may have opportunitys of making attempts upon the shore, or in the Rivers of Medway or Thames, or get away without fighting." The Council of War concluded that, as the French were then to leeward of them, this was an order to attack them next day if the wind held. The Dutch flag officers said they wished they were stronger, but the queen's order must be obeyed. Torrington himself held that the order deprived him of his liberty of action. Nottingham sent a letter enclosing the queen's order in such haste that he had not time to copy it. In this letter he insisted that, in spite of Torrington's eyes, the French had only sixty sail of the line to Torrington's fifty-six or fifty-seven ; he set himself up against Torrington's view of the situation, took not the slightest cognisance of Torrington's key-note—that it was only "whilst we observe them" that the French were prevented from doing mischief—and supposed he was making straight for the Gunfleet, whether the French followed him or not. Then, having done his best to prevent it, he wished the admiral "all imaginable success." What passed at the Council of War is not handed down to us, except that Torrington enjoined close action ; but Torrington did not wait for its assembly to promise cheerful obedience to the queen's commands in an instant reply to Nottingham. In this he controverted the Secretary of State's strategical views, and repeated that "whilst we observe the French they cannot make any attempt either upon sea or shore without running a great hazard ; and if we are beaten, all is exposed to their mercy."

In accordance with the general view of the Council of War, the allied fleet weighed at nine o'clock that evening, and lay to on the starboard tack all night. At two in the morning they heard the French gun-signals for anchoring,

and at three o'clock it was light enough to see them at anchor, whereupon Torrington made the signal to bear up.

It is hardly reasonable to assume that Torrington did not explain, at least to some extent, in Council, his plan of attack. It seems certain that, whether he did or not, the plan was not quite understood by Delaval, who commanded the rear, or by Evertsen, who commanded the Dutch in the van, or by Ashby, who commanded the van division of the centre, or Red squadron.

It may be a strong thing to say, but it appears that though the minutes of the court-martial that tried Torrington have disappeared, there is no naval battle about which the record is more complete. The authorities are, the depositions on oath of every surviving flag officer and captain, made to the Royal Commission sent down to Sheerness after the battle, and a speech made by Torrington at the bar of the House of Commons in November, 1690. Macaulay, in his rancorous falsification of evidence, says, "He spoke there at great length, but weakly and confusedly." The fact is that the speech, including correspondence read, could not have occupied more than half an hour in delivery; and it is one of the most lucid and concise expositions of fact and reason ever put together. Macaulay says, "He boasted of his services, of his sacrifices, and of his wounds." The fact was that he only mentioned these in very few words in his peroration, as proof that a man whose public life had been what his had been, was most unlikely to have failed through either "cowardice, negligence, or disaffection." Macaulay says, "He abused the Dutch." He did nothing of the sort; but freed them from all blame except of allowing their courage to overbalance their judgment. Macaulay says he abused "the Board of Admiralty and the Secretary of State." He certainly repeated what was already in the correspondence, namely, that the mishap was due, first, to the Government for not attending to his warnings in the winter and spring; and secondly, to its interference with his liberty of action in the presence of the French fleet. So the fact is, that while the evidence of the admirals and captains is good for all that happened in the battle, Torrington's

speech is a complete explanation of why it all happened ; and it becomes plain, on the face of it, that no court which rightly understood and weighed all the circumstances of the case, could possibly have condemned him.

As the parallel for Torrington's cautious tactics must be sought in Howe's conduct in presence of a superior fleet in 1782, so is the battle of Trafalgar and Nelson's conduct of it the parallel to be sought if we would rightly understand the battle of Beachy Head.

In the first place, the numerical inferiority both in ships and guns was greater in Torrington's case than in Nelson's. In the second place, Nelson's numerical inferiority was discounted by the fact that he commanded a homogeneous fleet, while Villeneuve's included two nationalities ; Torrington's inferiority was aggravated by the fact that he opposed an international to a national fleet. Nelson, at Trafalgar, had the immense advantage of feeling that every man in his fleet was aware of the established superiority of British gunnery to that of France or Spain. Torrington had no reason to suppose that the gunnery of the French ships would be inferior to his own. On the contrary, he knew that many of his ships were ill-manned, and there was evidence that the French were well-manned. His view of French gunnery proved to be right. Above all, there was this general difference of condition to be remembered, namely, that while Nelson had a long list of British victories over the French behind him, Torrington was in face of practically a new and untried foe, which had for months past been dominant on the coasts of Ireland. Something, too, must be allowed for the defective condition of Torrington's signal code, which necessitated messages by boat, where the flag officers at Trafalgar could say all they wanted to say by means of flags.

Torrington's plan of attack, as formed in his own mind, and, no doubt, more or less explained to the flag officers, however difficulties of language in speech and signals may have interfered with the Dutch comprehension of it, was mainly governed by his wide experience in the Dutch wars, and especially by his experience of the great battle of July

1666, when he was a lieutenant. He expected to find the French, eighty strong, in a long line, dead to leeward of him. The orthodox interval between ships in line of battle was at that time half a cable, or one hundred yards, and allowing each ship to occupy fifty yards, the length of the French line would extend over at least six miles. His own fleet of fifty-six ships would by the same reckoning extend over four and one-fifth miles; that is to say, that in a ship-to-ship encounter the Anglo-Dutch fleet would be overlapped by twenty-four ships, extending over nearly two miles.

Nelson, with smaller odds against him, proposed to allow the enemy's van of nine or ten ships to form the overlapping, believing that these ships would not have time to tack or wear and double on his own van before it had successfully dealt with the ships of the enemy's centre opposed to it, while his rear would not have more ships to deal with than it could manage. Torrington, however, had at the battle of July seen disaster occur from relying on these tactics. His plan was that the leader of his Dutch van should attack the French leader, and make a ship-to-ship encounter down towards the French centre; that at the other end of the line, Deleval's rear ship should attack the rear ship of the French, and make a ship-to-ship encounter up towards the French centre. That is to say, that the Dutch van of twenty-two ships should attack the twenty-two headmost ships of the French line; that Delaval's thirteen ships should attack the thirteen rearmost ships of the French, while Torrington with the centre or Red squadron, of twenty-one ships, should watch and keep in check the forty-five ships of the French centre. Under such an arrangement the only danger was that the French ships immediately astern of the Dutch should hug their wind and double on the Dutch rear; or that the French ships immediately ahead of Delaval's squadron should tack and double on Delaval's van. But it was clear that if either of these groups of the enemy made such movements, they could be met and checked by Ashby's van or by Rooke's rear division of the Red squadron. The numerical superiority of the French would thus clearly be neutralised; but the

success of the plan depended on the Dutch taking care that their headmost ship attacked the headmost ship of the French, and so on down the line, and that the sternmost ship of Delaval's squadron attacked the sternmost ship of the French, and so on up the line. The only obscure point in the plan is whether Torrington intended to keep the whole of his squadron in hand, or only his own division of it. There is reason to believe the latter. His claim was the advantage his plan gave him of supporting either his van or his rear, should it turn out that French artillery was better than either Dutch or English. It was a strange fate awaiting the admiral, that blame should rest upon his shoulders for two centuries on account of conduct which alone saved the Dutch, and brought them off with the loss of only one ship.

When the French were seen, at three o'clock in the morning, Torrington ordered the fleet to bear up, which it did, sailing before the fresh breeze, but probably in broken order.

About four o'clock the signal was made for the line of battle, to form which Torrington hauled his wind on the starboard tack, and at the same time the French were seen to weigh and form their line also on the starboard tack, but not close to the wind; their line, when formed, lying W.N.W. and E.S.E., with the wind from north to N.N.E.

When the line was formed, the allied fleet bore up, preserving it, while Torrington steered his own ship for the centre of the French, where he expected to see de Tourville's flag flying. Presently he and his flag-captain, Nevill, counted 82 ships in the enemy's line, of which 34 were ahead of, and 48 astern of de Tourville's flag. Torrington thereupon gave up all idea of attacking de Tourville himself, and continued to steer for the centre of the French. The natural result was, that as the French had headway, the allied ships as they bore down must have been gradually hauling to the wind on the starboard tack. But about then Torrington observed that Delaval was steering too much to starboard, and would be overlapped in his rear if he continued to do it. The admiral therefore steered more to port in order to push the vice-admiral into his place. But then came the question of not

allowing his ships to be raked as they approached the French line, so that, having in some degree moved Delaval towards the French rear, Torrington hauled somewhat to starboard, and came down in a "lasking" manner upon the enemy. Then the admiral saw that the Dutch were bearing up too much, and would certainly be overlapped by the French van. There was, presumably, no signal to meet such a case, and Torrington made the signal for battle, because the eighth article of the Fighting Instructions contained a positive order to the van to "steer for the headmost of the enemy's ships before engaging."

At this time the English line was three miles from the French, and as the reason for making the signal for battle was not understood, it was assumed by some of the admirals and captains that Torrington meant to engage at too great a distance to be effective. The Dutch, however, did not take the hint, but continued to bear up in such a way as to leave their van overlapped by several ships. They were not in good order, but they literally obeyed the signal for battle, and opened fire at long range.

Ashby, by order too, closed upon the Dutch, and left a gap between his division and the rest of the Red squadron. Three things were observed about the French. The rear part of their centre lay, not in line, but in a bow, so that they could only be closed with by standing to leeward of the main line. Though they had backed their topsails on the approach of the allies, they kept their top-gallant sails set, and sometimes set their foresails. They did not hug the wind, but throughout the whole fight kept bearing away two or three, or even three or four points, obliging the allies to follow suit.

The Dutch and Ashby getting into closer action ahead, and the Blue squadron astern, about nine o'clock the smoke became so dense that it was not easy to see what was going on over the extended line. It was observed by the captains in the centre, however, that Torrington's flagship, though the shot were passing over her, was "not engaged." Without question, this phrase, which only meant that she was not firing, was generally held to mean that Torrington was specially

backward. Torrington had, however, given positive orders not to fire till within effective range, and he did not, indeed, open fire until after he had had a man killed. He defended himself from the charge, by showing that in the end, two-thirds of the fleet had fewer killed and wounded than he had. But it is certain that the admiral never intended to entangle himself and his squadron by close action with the enemy's centre; he could not be sure that even if his tactics in the van and rear were fully carried out, his squadrons would beat those of the enemy, and he felt he must keep his hands free. The very conduct of the French, in continually bearing away, appeared to him to be a trap to induce him to follow to leeward, so that the unengaged ships of the enemy might the more easily haul their wind and double on his ships.

As the time went on it became clear that all along the line the French artillery was no worse than that of the allies, and that though Delaval in the rear was in close action, he was not making any serious impression on the French. He was, however, holding his own. But Torrington was not so easy as to the van, and about eleven he sent messages by boat to the ships ahead of him to make sail and close on the van, he himself setting his foresail at the same time. Then as he neared the Dutch he saw that what he was most afraid of had happened. The van was doubled on by from nine to twelve ships of the French van. Many ships of the Dutch and of Ashby's division were seen to be disabled, Ashby's flagship amongst them, and were being towed out of action by their boats, as the wind was falling light. The French in the van were not hurt at all, and were pressing heavily on the Dutch. This was about one o'clock, and it was nearly calm, the ebb tide having made. Torrington sent boats to order the Dutch to anchor, and to his own ships to tow between the Dutch and the French, so as to shield and relieve the former.

The Dutch dropped their anchors without shortening sail, and the French, not perceiving what had been done, were parted from them by the ebb tide, which also facilitated Torrington's forcing himself between the two. The battle thus slackened in the van, the Dutch having lost one disabled ship,

which could not, or at any rate did not, anchor, and could not be saved. The whole allied line soon anchored, following the admiral's motions, and the battle was over.

The Dutch were terribly knocked about, and so was the Blue squadron and Ashby's division, while there was scarcely a sign that the French had materially suffered. There was nothing for it but to retire to the eastward, when the flood made, with the disabled ships in tow; and it was felt that if the French should press, many ships could not be brought off, and must be destroyed. Happily, the French delayed the pursuit, and the destruction of disabled ships was not great. Torrington ultimately anchored at the Nore, and in a very short time the fleet was refitted and ready to act. De Tourville took only one miserable advantage of his victory, in burning a few small craft at Teignmouth, and looting the village.

Such was the unfortunate culmination of a career which, if it was not great, was certainly distinguished. It was but natural that the Government, and especially Nottingham, should be incensed against the admiral, and it was also natural to believe that he had sacrificed the Dutch, the more so as the Dutch officers declared that such was the case. Nottingham wrote a violent letter to the Hague, and the queen appointed a Commission to go down to Sheerness and to inquire into the facts of the battle, with power to remove Torrington if it saw fit. Three flag officers and thirty-three captains gave evidence on oath before the Commission, but only Admiral Delaval, and seven or eight of the captains used expressions which could by any possibility be twisted into throwing blame upon Torrington. In no case did such expressions come to more than a cautious intimation that if the centre had been in closer action things might have been better. Yet Torrington's reply was conclusive against such opinions. "The Dutch, and those other ships that fought longest and closest to the enemy were most disabled, nay, were almost all disabled, and no sign of damage appeared on the French side." If Torrington had not kept himself from being entangled with that part of the French line that was farthest to leeward, he could not possibly

have seen the danger of the Dutch, and could not have rescued them as he did.

However, Torrington was sent to the Tower, and afterwards to the Marshalsea, and was ultimately tried by court-martial on board the *Kent* at Sheerness, the Court consisting of thirty-two captains, presided over by Admiral Delaval, the officer who, in his former evidence, had gone nearest to imputing direct blame to the admiral. The verdict, notwithstanding some violence on the part of Dutch witnesses, was unanimous, and pronounced honourable acquittal.

William was, however, in a political corner, and he removed Torrington from his command; but, contrary to general understanding, there is reason to believe that the king was not really offended with Torrington, and continued to visit and befriend him after his retirement. Contemporary opinion came to agreement with the court-martial, and to understanding that the admiral was more sinned against than sinning. The rancorous and anonymous penny-a-liner might continue to pour out the foul abuse which it suited the more rancorous Macaulay to accept as gospel, but the more sober and weighty *New Observer*, friendly to Nottingham and hostile to Torrington, has left the truth in words which form a fitting close to this article. The writer, on the 9th July, 1690, confirmed Torrington's strategical view by declaring that we should be the gainers, and the French losers, by the naval campaign, for that the French "had expended a vast treasure to no purpose," and then went on: "I need say no more as to the French fleet but this: though it may be, if I had had the honour to be in some men's posts, I should have choosed, with the royal prophet, to submit to any other fate rather than that of fleeing before my enemies, yet it was never looked upon as good policy to venture a battle upon unequal terms, when by delaying it till a reinforcement came up we lose nothing but a little reputation, which a subsequent success can fully make up."

The lesson of Beachy Head, and the blame, therefore, is for the statesman, not for the admiral. It is dangerous for the former to interfere with the freedom of action of the latter.

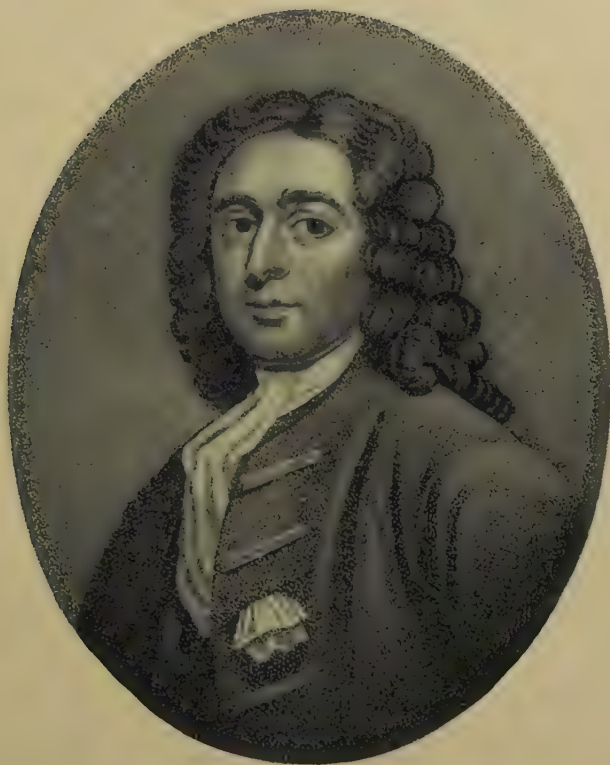
Torrington was never afterwards publicly employed, except as a Commissioner of Greenwich Hospital, in which office he died in 1716, having bequeathed a part of his property to that institution. He was twice married; first, at the age of twenty-five, to the widow of a Mr. Pheasant, which union proved unhappy, and involved a long separation; and secondly, at the age of fifty-seven, to the Dowager Baroness of Crewe; at which time he was "a very fat man." By neither marriage was there any issue.

EDWARD VERNON, ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE SQUADRON.

BY H. VERNON VENABLES KYRKE AND A. VENABLES
KYRKE.

THE subject of this memoir was born at Westminster on the 12th November, 1684. He was descended from one of the most ancient families in England. The town and district of Vernon in Normandy in 1052 belonged to William de Vernon, whose two sons, Richard and Walter, appear, from the rolls of Battle Abbey, to have come over with William the Conqueror. The king granted various baronies in Cheshire and Staffordshire to the Vernons after the Conquest, and many of their descendants have received titles and honours. Edward Vernon's father was Secretary of State in the reign of William and Mary, and sat in four successive Parliaments as member for Penryn in Cornwall.

Our hero was educated at Westminster School, under Dr. Busby. His father wished him to find a profession in civil life, but the lad's instincts led him to long for the sea. It is said that he went by the nickname of "Admiral Vernon" amongst his schoolfellows, and so bent was he upon embracing the naval profession, that his father at last unwillingly consented, and, quitting Westminster for Oxford, he devoted himself principally to those studies which would be of use to him as a sailor, working at astronomy, navigation, etc., with great assiduity and success. Vernon's first naval experience was under Admiral Hopson, in the *Torbay*, in October, 1702, during the War of the Spanish Succession, when, at the age



E. Vernon

EDWARD VERNON, ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE SQUADRON.

of eighteen, he took part in the destruction of the French fleet and the Spanish galleons in Vigo Harbour. The *Torbay* on that occasion had a very narrow escape ; for after she had broken the boom which protected the harbour, and cast anchor between two French men-of-war, a fireship ran down upon her. Her rigging caught fire, and had it not been for a singular circumstance, the whole ship would have been consumed. It happened that the fireship was a merchantman laden with snuff. She blew up, but the snuff suffocated the flames and saved the *Torbay*. This incident is related in Campbell's 'Lives of the Admirals.' It seems rather extraordinary that the crew of the *Torbay* were not suffocated as well ! On this expedition Vernon gained by his gallantry the special recommendation in despatches of Admiral Hopson.

Immediately on his return, he was appointed to the *Resolution* as second lieutenant, and sailed to the West Indies on an expedition under the command of Commodore Walker. On this occasion he carefully studied the navigation of the Leeward Islands, and the knowledge he then acquired subsequently proved of great advantage to him.

In 1704 Vernon was with the fleet which convoyed the King of Spain to Lisbon, and he received from his Majesty's own hand the present of a valuable ring and a hundred guineas. He was present on the 13th August that year at the battle off Malaga.

His promotion was very rapid, his intrepidity and seamanship having brought him under special notice, and on the 22nd January, 1706, he was raised to the rank of post-captain, and appointed to the command of the *Dolphin* frigate. He was ordered to the Mediterranean under Sir John Leake, who shortly afterwards removed him from the *Dolphin* and appointed him to the *Rye*, and sent him to England in August following with the despatches announcing the surrender of Alicante. He returned to the Mediterranean in the *Rye*, and stayed there during the following year, under the command of Sir Cloudesley Shovel.

Early in 1708 he was appointed to the *Ferisey*, 48 guns, and sailed for the West Indies in May, with a reinforcement

of three ships of the line for the fleet under command of Sir Charles Wager. On this station Vernon very greatly distinguished himself by his vigilance and activity. He began by capturing a Spanish sloop laden with tobacco, and directly afterwards retook from the French a ship armed with twenty guns, and many other vessels belonging to the enemy. He continued to command the *Fersey* in the West Indies until the close of the war. In May, 1711, he captured off Jamaica a French ship of thirty guns and 120 men, and subsequently ran another large ship ashore, where she went to pieces. During the remainder of the campaign he was employed under Commodore Littleton in watching the movements of the enemy at Carthagena, a duty he carried out with signal success.

The Peace of Utrecht then put a stop to our hero's activity. In the year 1714 he was in command of the *Assistance* of 50 guns, one of the fleet sent to the Baltic, under Sir George Norris, to assist the Russians against the Swedes. In 1716 he convoyed the king in this vessel from Holland. In 1726 he commanded the *Grafton*, 70 guns, and joined the fleet, then under Sir Charles Wager, in the Baltic, sent there to preserve the peace of the northern states of Europe.

Before this, however, in 1722, Vernon had been elected a member of Parliament. He sat for the borough of Penryn in Cornwall, a seat for which his father had previously been four times elected. During this Parliament he was nearly all the time afloat, and consequently during that period his actions as a legislator call for no comment.

In 1727, on the accession of George II., Vernon was again elected for Penryn, and soon made himself known by his fierce opposition to the pacific administration of Sir Robert Walpole. Doubtless, after so many years of war, peace and rest were the greatest blessings that any prime minister could give to the country; but it is possible, that in some respects to gain those blessings, the honour and dignity of the country may to some extent have been sacrificed. Vernon no doubt took this view, and resented it with the full force of his haughty and fiery patriotism. Doubtless the opposition of Bolingbroke,

and other leaders of the opposition, may have arisen from more or less interested motives, such as desire for place and the fruits of office, or personal animosities ; but there appears to be no doubt that Vernon was actuated only by honest and disinterested ideas and love for his country.

Captain Vernon is not stated to have been an eloquent speaker, but he was never at a loss for words, and spoke with great force and vigour, and absolute directness. He considered the honour of England endangered by the pacific counsels of Walpole. His opinions were always delivered with a vigour and directness that sprang from a firm conviction that they were correct. His meaning was always clear, and, though a frequent speaker, he always spoke to the point, and was therefore listened to with attention. He was, however, hasty and impetuous, his temper being constitutionally violent ; and often, in the heat of debate, said things which on calmer consideration he would have wished unsaid. The command which he was given in 1739 is said to have resulted from one of his hasty speeches, which gave the minister a long-wished-for opportunity of getting rid of so troublesome and uncompromising an opponent. The war with Spain broke out at length in this year. Walpole was a peace minister, and had for years staved off hostilities. But besides the English occupation of Gibraltar, which Spain had in vain tried to recover, there was the question of the English claim to share in the trade to the Spanish West Indies. Hence constant disputes, the exercise of the right of search by Spanish ships of war, insults to British merchantmen, and sometimes cruelties, among which was the commonly believed story that they had cut off Captain Jenkins's ears. The war-party in England was now beyond Walpole's control, and war was declared.

The House had been engaged in debates relative to the aggressions of the Spanish *guarda costas* in the American seas. Vernon, after reproaching the Government with its timorous inactivity, is reported to have pledged himself that he would reduce the town of Porto Bello with a force not exceeding six ships of the line, and that with this force he

would undertake the enterprise, and forfeit his reputation and his life should he prove unsuccessful. Walpole jumped at the chance. He considered the force quite inadequate, and probably he indulged in a secret hope that his opponent would disgrace himself and his party by failing to execute what he boasted he could achieve.

It must not be forgotten that Porto Bello was a sore subject with the English people. In 1725 Admiral Hosier had been sent there with a strong fleet, and with the absurd orders that he was not to attack the fort—not even to capture the Spanish galleons—because Walpole did not wish to begin an active war, but to cruise off the town and delay the arrival of treasure in Spain by blockading the ships. It was an ignominious and disastrous position for Admiral Hosier, brought on by no fault of his own. His fleet practically disappeared: his ships rotted away; disease broke out: he himself died, and more than 3000 officers and seamen. It was no wonder that the English people longed to wipe out the humiliation.*

* It is worth while recalling Glover's fine ballad 'Admiral Hosier's Ghost.' He appears with his train of dead seamen:

“As near Portobello lying
On the gently swelling flood,
At midnight with streamers flying
Our triumphant navy rode;
Then while Vernon sat all-glorious
From the Spaniards' late defeat,
And his crews with shouts victorious
Drank success to England's fleet:

* * * * *

“Hear, oh hear, our fatal story,
I am Hosier's injured ghost,
You who now have purchased glory
At the place where I was lost,
Though in Portobello's ruin
You now triumph free from fears,
When you think on our undoing
You will mix your joy with tears.

“See those mournful spectres sweeping
Ghastly o'er this hated wave,
Whose wan cheeks are stained with weeping,
These were English captains brave.

On the 9th July, 1739, Vernon was created a vice-admiral of the Blue, and appointed commander-in-chief of all his Majesty's ships in the West Indies. He sailed on his flagship the *Burford*, and arrived at Jamaica on the 23rd October. During the voyage he paid much attention to the training and discipline of his crews. A great proportion of them were so raw and inexperienced and unfit for their duties, that he considered it his duty to send a strong representation on the subject to the Duke of Newcastle. The energy, however, with which he devoted himself to the improvement of this raw material very soon effected a great difference, as the result of the first engagement with the enemy showed.

On the 5th November, 1739, Admiral Vernon sailed from Port Royal with the following ships under his command :—

Ships.	Guns.	Commanders.
Burford	70 . .	{ Vice-Admiral Vernon. Captain T. Watson.
Hampton Court	70 . .	{ Commodore Brown. Captain Dent.
Norwich	50 . .	Captain R. Herbert.
Worcester	60 . .	Captain Perry Mayne.
Stafford	60 . .	Captain T. Trevor.
Princess Louisa	60 . .	Captain T. Waterhouse.
Sheerness, frigate		

Mark those numbers, pale and horrid—
 Those were once my sailors bold,
 Lo ! each hangs his drooping forehead,
 While his dismal tale is told.

“ I, by twenty sail attended,
 Did this Spanish town affright,
 Nothing then its wealth defended
 But my orders not to fight.
 Oh ! that in the rolling ocean
 I had cast then with disdain,
 And obeyed my heart's warm motion
 To have quelled the pride of Spain !

“ For resistance I could fear none,
 But with twenty ships had done
 What thou, brave and happy Vernon,
 Hast achieved with six alone.”

* * * * *

The following orders were given by the Admiral after putting to sea :—

“Upon making the port of Porto Bello, and having a fair wind to favour them, and daylight for the attempt, to have the ships clear in all respects for immediate service ; and on the proper signal to form them into a line of battle, as directed ; and being formed, to follow in the same order of battle to the attack in the manner hereafter directed. And as the north shore of the harbour of Porto Bello is represented to the Admiral to be a bold steep shore, on which, at the first entrance, stands Castel de Ferro or Iron Castle, Commodore Brown and the ships that follow him are directed to pass the said fort within less than a cable's length distance, giving the enemy as they pass as warm a fire as possible, both from great guns and musketry ; then Commodore Brown is to steer away for the Gloria Castle and anchor as near as he can to the easternmost part of it, for battering down all the defences of it ; but so as to leave room for Captain Mayne, in the *Worcester*, to anchor astern of him against the westernmost bastion, and to do the same there, and to follow such orders as the Commodore may think proper to give him for attacking the said castle. Captain Herbert in the *Norwich* after giving his fire at the Iron Castle to push on for the castle of St. Jeromino lying to the eastward of the town and to anchor as near it as he possibly can, and batter it down ; and Captain Trevor in the *Stafford* following the Admiral to come to an anchor abreast of the easternmost part of the Iron Castle, so as to leave room for Captain Waterhouse, in the *Princess Louisa*, to anchor astern of him, for battering the westernmost part of the castle and continue there until the service is completed, and make themselves masters of it : the youngest officers to follow the further orders of the elder in the further prosecution of the attack ; and if the weather be favourable for it on their going in, each ship, besides having its long-boat towing astern, to have its barge alongside to tow the long-boats away, with such part of the soldiers as can conveniently go in them, and to come under the Admiral's stern, for his directing a descent with them where he should find it most proper to order it. From the men's inexperience in service, it will be necessary to be as cautious as possible to prevent hurry and confusion, and a fruitless waste of powder and shot ; the captains to give the strictest orders to their respective officers to take the greatest care that no gun shall be fired but what they, or those they particularly appoint, first see levelled, and direct the firing of ; and that they shall strictly prohibit all their men from hallooing and making irregular noise, that would only serve to throw them into confusion, till such time as the service be performed and when they have nothing to do but glory in the victory. Such of the ships as have mortars and cohorns on board are ordered to use them in the attack.”

Porto Bello was protected by three forts or strongholds. Castel de Ferro was on a precipitous rock, guarding the

north-east point of the bay. Gloria Castle faced it on the opposite side, and nearer the town on the eastward was Fort St. Jeronimo.

The fleet reached Porto Bello on the 20th November, but, it being almost a dead calm, the Admiral was unable to manœuvre his ships, and anchored about six leagues from the shore. The next morning he worked to windward in battle formation; but, the wind proving easterly, he was obliged to confine his attack to Castel de Ferro. The *Hampton Court*, according to orders, led the line, and attacked it with great fury, firing no less than 400 shots in twenty-five minutes. The other ships followed, and so fierce a fire at short distance was concentrated upon the fort that after a while the Spaniards deserted their batteries. Seeing this, Admiral Vernon at once signalled for landing, which was promptly carried out. The ships were kept close in shore, and covered the landing with their fire, and though the men disembarked in the teeth of the lower battery, only two were killed. There was no breach in the walls, but the men climbed over each other's shoulders, there being no scaling-ladders, through the embrasures under the very mouths of the great guns. In a few moments they were in possession of the lower battery, struck the Spanish flag and hoisted the British colours. The Spaniards in the castle, terrified by the boldness of their assailants, forthwith surrendered.

The following day, without further fighting, Castle Gloria and Fort St. Jeronimo capitulated on the following terms:—

1. That the garrison have leave to march out with military honours, and be allowed two cannon mounted, with ten charges of powder and match lighted.

2. That till the time of evacuation they shall not be molested, and may carry with them necessary provisions, and ammunition, and be allowed a guard.

3. That all the vessels in the harbour, with their apparel and arms, be delivered up for his Britannick Majesty's use, allowing the officers and crew leave to retire.

4. That the British troops be put into possession of Gloria Castle, and Fort St. Jeronimo, by four o'clock in the evening.

5. That these conditions being performed, the clergy, churches, and inhabitants shall be preserved in all their privileges and immunities.

6. That all the prisoners taken by the Spaniards be set at liberty before the Admiral's departure.

The total loss sustained by the squadron in killed and wounded was twenty men. Five of these were killed and three wounded on the Admiral's ship.

The captured vessels consisted of two men-of-war, four sloops, and a periaguay, being some of the vessels which had for some time past inflicted so much damage to our merchant shipping on these coasts.

The news of this great victory was received by the country with an extraordinary outburst of enthusiasm. Admiral Vernon received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, and the Corporation of London presented him with the Freedom of the City in a splendid gold casket. Medals were struck in his honour and his effigy was displayed throughout the whole kingdom.

Mr. Rentone, who brought the despatches, was at once raised to the rank of post-captain, and received 200 guineas.

The defences of Porto Bello were razed to the ground. Vernon showed himself as humane in victory as he had been brave in attack. The soldiers and sailors were strictly forbidden to plunder the town, and to reward them for their forbearance he distributed among them 10,000 dollars which had been sent to Porto Bello to pay the garrison a few days only before the place fell into his hands.* The iron guns captured were all destroyed, but forty pieces of brass cannon, ten field-pieces, four mortars and eighteen patteraroes, all of brass, were taken on board as trophies. Vernon returned to Jamaica in the beginning of December.

After refitting, Admiral Vernon sailed on the 25th February, 1740, to attack Carthage. On March 3rd he lay in Playa Grande Bay near the town, and shortly after commenced a bombardment which lasted three days, during which time he discharged 350 bombs which did great damage. His

* A letter from a sailor in the fleet has been preserved, in which he writes to his wife: "I have longed this four years to cut off some of their ears, and was in hopes I should have sent you one for a sample now; but our good Admiral, God bless him, was too merciful!"

forces were inadequate to capture the place, and, satisfied with the injury he had inflicted, he sailed with his fleet for Porto Bello, where he repaired and watered the squadron. He then proceeded to attack the castle of Chagres, a few leagues from Porto Bello. He bombarded the castle for two days, when it surrendered. Having blown up the fort, and taken on board a rich prize of plate, merchandise, etc., the Admiral returned with his squadron to Jamaica, being in want of stores and supplies from England.

Vernon's brilliant successes made such an impression upon the Ministry, that it decided to send out such a reinforcement as would enable him to attack the principal settlements of the Spaniards in the West. It therefore despatched a most formidable fleet consisting of twenty-five sail of the line, a proportionate number of frigates, and many transports, and upwards of 10,000 soldiers to join him. The land forces were commanded by Lord Cathcart, an officer of ability and experience; but by sad misfortune he died soon after his arrival in the West Indies. General Wentworth succeeded to the command. He was an officer without experience, resolution, or authority, and utterly unfitted for his important post. To this unlucky appointment may be traced the disasters that followed, and greatly dimmed the lustre of Vernon's renown.

The fleet of which Admiral Vernon now found himself in command consisted of no less than thirty-one sail of the line, by far the most powerful that had ever sailed the American seas, and high must have been his hopes when on the 28th January, 1741, he sailed from Jamaica for Port Louis off St. Domingo, where he wished to ascertain the strength of a French squadron, supposed to be lying there, as it was considered that the French Government was unfavourably disposed to Great Britain. On arrival near St. Louis, however, he discovered that the French fleet, being much distressed for want of provisions, and great sickness and mortality, had sailed for Europe. After a council of war, it was decided to proceed direct to Carthagena, and attack it by land and sea.

On the 4th March the fleet reached Playa Grande, and on

the 9th brought-to off the fort of Bocca Chica, which defended the entrance of Carthagena Harbour. The fleet began at once a heavy bombardment of the fortresses of Chamba, St. Iago and St. Philip, and in an hour had driven the enemy out of them with great loss. A force of soldiers was then landed, which carried them by assault and took possession. The next day the remainder of Wentworth's force was landed and six regiments of marines, and by the 15th all the artillery and stores were brought on shore. A fascine battery on the west shore causing much annoyance to the General, Admiral Vernon landed a force of 300 soldiers and a detachment of sailors to destroy it. The party on landing was surprised by a masked battery of five guns, which opened fire on them, but was speedily rushed. The invading force followed up this success by storming the fascine battery, and the courage and dash which it displayed so dismayed the Spaniards that, though the battery mounted twenty 24-pounders, they were quickly forced to surrender. The cannon were spiked, and their carriages destroyed, and the detachment returned. The Admiral was so pleased with the boldness and spirit shown by the seamen that he gave each man a dollar reward.

General Wentworth proceeded to bombard Bocca Chica on the 22nd from the land. The Admiral sent five ships under Commodore Lestock to batter it from the west, which he did with the greatest courage, under a terrible fire in which the commander of the *Prince Frederic*, Lord Aubrey Beauclerk, was killed. This gallant young sailor, after having both legs shot off, continued to give his orders for some minutes, until he fainted from loss of blood, and shortly after expired. The combined fire having considerably breached the castle, it was determined to carry it by assault. At midnight on the 25th the troops rushed the breach; the enemy, completely surprised, bolted panic-stricken without firing a shot. Fort St. Joseph was immediately afterwards stormed with similar results.

The Spaniards, in great alarm at these signal disasters, prepared to sink some of their ships in the channel, in order to prevent the nearer approach of the British fleet. Admiral Vernon, perceiving this, ordered the seamen to board and

capture as many of them as possible. They boarded and took the *Gallicia* of 80 guns, and brought her off. The enemy succeeded, however, in sinking the *Africa* and the *Don Carlos*, whilst the *St. Philip* was set fire to and blew up. Admiral Vernon then proceeded to cut the boom, which was moored across the harbour channel, and to warp several of his ships into the inner harbour. The Spaniards then, under a heavy fire from the fleet, abandoned the strong fort of Castillo Grande, and also Fort Manzanella opposite.

Admiral Vernon now considered that but little more remained to enable him to take possession of Carthagena. The brilliant success of his last operation in forcing the narrow channel of the harbour, of such difficult access, strongly defended by a formidable castle, three forts, a boom, four ships of the line, and other smaller ones, and two batteries, and the fact that only one more stronghold remained to complete the conquest, viz. the fort of St. Lazar, justified him in that belief and in sending home a ship with intelligence to that effect. The news was received with the greatest enthusiasm. The Admiral became more than ever the people's hero, and public rejoicings took place over the whole kingdom, scarcely less than if the news had been of the complete reduction of the place.

The climate of Carthagena is very unhealthy at all times, and now the rainy season began to set in. Great sickness prevailed amongst the troops, and the death list became very heavy. The breach, commenced early in the campaign, between the Admiral and General Wentworth widened daily. The latter remained inactive, notwithstanding the arguments and reproaches of the former, whose energetic spirit chafed at the delays occasioned by the indecision and probably by the jealousy of the General. As we have said, only Fort St. Lazar had remained to be taken, to complete the conquest of Carthagena; but whilst Wentworth was doing nothing, the Spaniards were daily throwing up new works and strengthening their position. The Admiral wished General Wentworth, immediately after the harbour and forts had been taken, and whilst the Spaniards were terrified and demoralised, to

attack Fort St. Lazar by storm with his whole force, which would have probably ended the campaign at once, but that irresolute and incapable officer could not be prevailed upon to do so. The fact that all the glory and success up to then had been won by the sea, and not the land, gave force to him, and he was, moreover, indignant that the Admiral should presume to direct him in the execution of an enterprise chiefly of a military character. Thus time went on; the troops, decimated by sickness and demoralised by inaction, became less able to cope with success with an enemy whose position became stronger daily, and who were recovering from the shock of their earlier losses. At length Wentworth decided to attack. He disdained, however, to take the Admiral into his confidence, and his scheme was protested against by his colleagues Generals Blakeney and Wolfe as being rash and futile. A detachment of 1200 men only was ordered to attack Fort St. Lazar by escalade; the attempt met with fearful disaster, the attacking force were hopelessly outnumbered and were cut to pieces, losing no less than 600 men killed and wounded.

The rainy season had now set in with such violence that it became impossible for the troops to remain on shore, and Admiral Vernon, finding it impossible either to get General Wentworth to act in accordance with his views, or to carry on hostilities on his own initiative, with any prospect of success, was compelled to end the campaign, the cup of success having been, at the moment of apparent triumph, dashed from his lips. After a final bombardment of the town, which led to no results, the troops were re-embarked, no less than 3000 having perished through sickness and the disastrous attack. All the fortresses, which had been captured were razed to the ground, and the damage done to the Spaniards was calculated to exceed half a million pounds.

The fleet returned to Jamaica on the 19th May, and the Admiral sent home eleven ships of the line as a convoy of the homeward-bound trade vessels.

It was decided that an attack on the Island of Cuba should be the next operation, as soon as the fleet had refitted.

A reinforcement of 3000 troops, and a supply of naval stores having arrived from England, the squadron sailed from Jamaica on the 5th July. The fleet comprised eight battleships, twelve frigates with fireships and sloops of war, and forty transports and storeships; and on the 18th July it anchored safely at Walthenham Bay on the south side of the Island of Cuba. The troops were landed at once without opposition, and the Admiral sent a despatch to England expressing his anticipation that the whole island would soon be in his possession. Had the land forces been under his command, or that of a general of vigour and ability, this might not improbably have been the case, but, alas for the success of the undertaking, General Wentworth was still Commander-in-Chief, and more than ever out of harmony with the Admiral.

It was resolved at a Council of War that St. Jago (more familiar to us lately as Santiago) should be the object of attack. It was considered to be wholly defenceless from the landside, but practically secured from an attack by sea on account of the difficulty of navigating the channel. It will, of course, be remembered that there were sailing ships only in those days, and the channel was narrow and tortuous and protected by forts. It was, therefore, decided to make the attack from the land, and Admiral Vernon urged that the whole of the troops, except such as should be required to keep open communications with the base, which would be guarded by the fleet, should be pushed forward at once. The General, paralysed by indecision and incompetence, however attempted nothing of importance. He sent out small parties, who were rarely opposed by an enemy, and at length, after nearly three months of wearisome inaction, informed the Admiral that he feared it would be impossible for him to penetrate to St. Jago by land! Disgusted and humiliated Vernon re-embarked the troops and sailed for Jamaica on the 20th November.

On his arrival at Jamaica Admiral Vernon wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary of State, earnestly begging that he might be recalled, and requesting as the only favour that he should ask of the Crown that his conduct in the

expeditions against Carthagera and Cuba should be strictly inquired into. He assured the Duke that until his recall no one should forward every service for the honour of the king and country with more care and diligence than he would,

“but under his daily prayers for a deliverance from being conjoined to a gentleman whose opinions he had long experienced to be more changeable than the moon, though he had endeavoured agreeably by his orders to maintain the most civil correspondence in his power with General Wentworth.”

The Duke of Newcastle declined to recall him, and assured him, in strong and flattering terms, that he was freed from all blame in the opinion of the king and the nation, and unfortunately succeeded in persuading him to retain his command, though strongly against his wishes and his better judgment.

On the 25th January, 1742, a reinforcement of 2000 marines, with two battleships and a frigate, arrived, and Admiral Vernon's sanguine spirits revived with hopes of obliterating the disgrace of the two last fruitless expeditions by some brilliant achievement. It was decided in Council of War to land at Porto Bello, and, marching across the Isthmus of Panama, to attack the town of that name. Accordingly the fleet sailed on the 16th March. It consisted of eight ships of the line, five smaller ships of war, and forty transports with 3000 fighting men, and 500 negroes raised by the Governor of Jamaica.

The squadron arrived duly at Porto Bello, and the governor and garrison of the place immediately fled and retired to Panama, and no opposition whatever was made to the landing of the troops. This seemed to be the prelude to a brilliant success, and the Admiral expected and urged that the troops should at once march on Panama, a course which presented no apparent difficulty. A Council of War of the land officers only under General Wentworth's auspices, however, for no apparent reason decided to give up the enterprise, and to the cruel mortification of Vernon, and in spite of his bitter remonstrances, he was forced to re-embark the troops a few days only after they were landed, and to return to Jamaica. No further operations were attempted, and in the latter part

of the year, both the Admiral and the General were recalled and returned to England.

A letter written by Admiral Vernon to the Duke of Newcastle shortly before his departure from Jamaica is worth quoting. He says—

“that he could not be insensible how great a concern the disappointments on their several expeditions must have been to his Majesty ; but begged leave, at the same time, to say, in behalf of himself and the officers and men that had served under his command, that no part of the disappointment was justly to be attributed to the sea forces ; nor did he think it was in want of courage or inclination to serve his Majesty in the land forces ; but that this unhappy event was principally owing to the command falling into the hands of General Wentworth, who had proved himself in no ways equal to it. And though the Vice-Admiral pretended to little experience in military affairs by land, yet it was his opinion, that if the sole command had been in him, both on the Carthagera expedition and on the Cuba one also, that the British forces would have made themselves masters both of Carthagera and St. Jago, and with the loss of much fewer men than had died through the imprudent conduct of General Wentworth, in many instances.”

That this opinion, expressed by Admiral Vernon himself with so much force and conviction, was well founded it is not difficult to believe. Entick, in his *Naval History*, says that

“if the sole command had been in the hands of Admiral Vernon, the whole of the Spanish possessions in the West Indies must have been conquered by the British forces.”

The ability of naval officers to command expeditions on land has been often demonstrated—to mention a recent instance, the brilliant feat performed by Sir Harry H. Rawson, Rear-Admiral of the Cape of Good Hope Squadron in the attack and capture of the City of Benin, the force being commanded throughout by himself in person. It is said that Entick's opinion was shared by the nation at large, and that Vernon's popularity suffered no diminution from the reverses in fortune he had experienced whilst acting in conjunction with General Wentworth.

Vernon was advanced to be Vice-Admiral of the Red in 1743, but saw no active service until the spring of 1745, when he was promoted to be Admiral of the White and

appointed to the command of the squadron of observation in the North Seas, to watch the equipments of the French at Dunkirk and elsewhere, which were evidently intended for the invasion of Great Britain. It was a time of great national peril and alarm. Prince Charles Edward, the "Chevalier," supported by the promises of assistance of the French Ministry, considered that a favourable opportunity had arisen for the invasion of Great Britain and the recovery of the Crown. Much disaffection, more particularly amongst the higher classes and in Scotland, existed, and the danger of the success of the Popish Pretender, and of the House of Stuart, the enemy of freedom, independence, and prosperity, seemed to the nation to be real and imminent. At this crisis the appointment of so able and popular a commander as Admiral Vernon was received with universal approbation.

The *St. George* was his first flagship, but he afterwards shifted his flag to the *Norwich*, and from the Downs watched the opposite French ports. The author of 'Biographia Navalis' says—

"This period of his command was, perhaps, the most interesting of his whole life; and it is but bare justice to his memory to confess no man could have been more diligent or more successful in that particular service to which the necessities of his country called him."

If an invasion was seriously intended, it was frustrated by the ability and activity of the Admiral, who watched the enemy with such unceasing care that hardly one of their ships dared venture out between Ostend and Havre, or if it did it was pounced upon, and either captured or driven back into port.

How acute the danger was may be shown by the following letter written by Admiral Vernon:—

"*Norwich*, in the Downs, December 20.

"SIR,

"As from the intelligence I have procured last night, of the enemy's having brought away from Dunkirk great numbers of their small embarkations, and many of them laden with cannon, field-carriages powder, shot, and other military stores, the Irish troops being marched out of Dunkirk towards Calais. General Lowendahl and many other officers being at Dunkirk, with a young person among them they call the

Prince, and was said to be the second son of the Pretender ; and as I can't but apprehend they are preparing for a descent from the ports of Calais and Boulogne, and which I suspect may be attempted at Dungeness where many of my cruisers are in motion for, and I have some thoughts of moving to-morrow with part of my ships, if the weather should prove moderate for a descent ;—I thought it my duty for his Majesty's service, to advise you of it ; and I desire you will communicate this my letter to the Mayor of Deal, and that the neighbouring towns should have advice for assembling to their common defence ; and my cruisers' signals for discovering the approach of an enemy will be their Jack flag flying at their top-mast-head, and firing a gun every half hour, and to desire they will forward the alarm.

“ I am, sirs,

“ Your humble servant,

“ E. VERNON.

“ To John Norris, Esq., at Deal Castle, or to the Mayor of Deal in his absence.”

The attack expected by the Admiral was not made, and a few days after the date of the letter he sailed from the Downs on a cruise along the French coast of the Channel, the *Monmouth* being his flagship. The fleet consisted of five battleships, five frigates, and fifteen tenders. Nothing was seen of any French fleet, however, and no further alarms of an invasion took place, the enemy being no doubt satisfied that any such project was futile in the face of the alertness of the English squadrons.

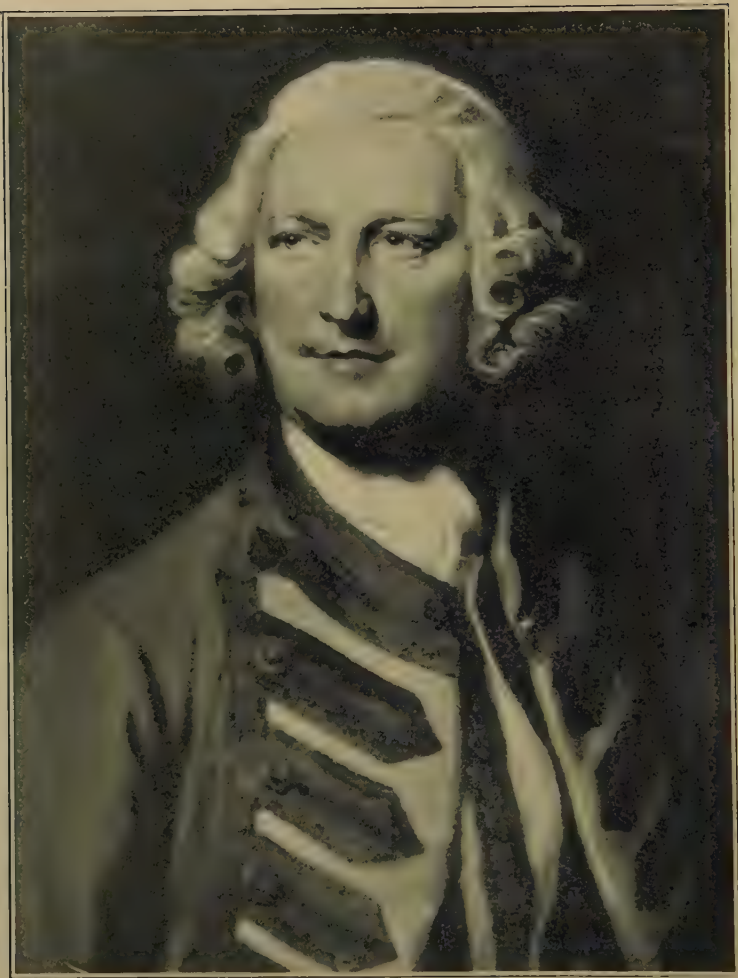
During this time very serious misunderstandings occurred between the Admiral and the Board of Admiralty, probably owing almost entirely to faults of temper upon the side of the former. He was naturally of a proud disposition, haughty and unaccommodating. The Board of Admiralty was feeble and weak—Vernon considered that his propositions should be adopted in every case, and when differences arose in opinion his communications with the Board were impatient and even insulting. The climax was reached on the 1st January, 1746, when, in consequence of the strained relations then subsisting between them, Vernon was ordered by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to strike his flag, which he did, handing over the command of his fleet to Vice-Admiral Martin.

Vernon was not the man to submit calmly to what he considered unjust treatment, and he wrote many letters strongly and fearlessly worded to various persons in high office.

Besides this he published several pamphlets in vindication of his character, and in them he inserted the correspondence which had taken place between him and the Board of Admiralty. The result of this was, that on the 11th April, 1746, he was struck off the list of admirals.

From this time he lived quietly, taking little part in public matters, except attending the House of Commons as member for Ipswich. He does not appear, however, to have utilised his position in the House for the exploitation of any of his personal grievances. He died suddenly at the age of 73 at his residence at Nacton in Suffolk, on the 30th October, 1757.

As a practical seaman no naval commander of his time was probably his equal. He introduced many improvements in the rigging of ships. He strongly protested against the overmasting which then prevailed of the battleship and frigates, and his views on that and on all similar matters were received with respect and his suggestions ultimately adopted. It is stated that it was he who first introduced rations of grog into the Navy. As a commander he was brave and courageous, sagacious in forming his plans, quick and bold in carrying them out. As a man his integrity and honour were unsullied. His temper, however, was irritable; he was contemptuous of the opinions of others and impatient of control; and unfortunately he never exercised any restraint in his communications, either in speaking or writing, with those who differed from him. It was this fatal want of tact which probably caused those blemishes which marred his otherwise glorious career. With tact he might have bent the weak character of Wentworth to conform to his strong will, and certainly he would have avoided those disagreements with the Admiralty in the last year of his service which deprived him of those final honours which he so richly deserved and which the nation in its heart accorded to him. His faults, however, were faults of disposition only, and his fame will survive and his memory will be honoured so long as the history of Great Britain's naval glory shall endure.



Anson

GEORGE, LORD ANSON, ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET.

From a Pastel Drawing at Shugborough.

VI.

ADMIRAL-OF-THE-FLEET, GEORGE
LORD ANSON.

BY THE EARL OF LICHFIELD.

*George Anson was borne on 3^d Georges Day
Anno Dni 1697 about five in the Morning*

So runs the inscription in the family Bible at Shugborough, recording the birth of the famous admiral.

George Anson was the second surviving son of William Anson of Shugborough, in Staffordshire ; his mother, Isabella, was a daughter of Charles Carrier of Wirksworth, and co-heiress with her sister Janet. The latter married Thomas Parker, afterwards Lord Chancellor and first Earl of Macclesfield. There are no records of Anson's boyhood, but it is a tradition that he loved to hear stirring tales of seafaring life, and that he was destined for the Navy at an early age. As was usually the case in those days, his first experience of the sea was as a volunteer on board the *Ruby* ; he joined this ship in the early part of 1712, when he was fourteen years old. For the next few years he continued as a volunteer, first on the *Ruby*, and then on the *Monmouth*. In 1716, when serving in the *Hampshire*, frigate, in the Baltic, he received his acting order as lieutenant from Admiral Sir John Norris, who was then in command of a squadron sent to co-operate with the Russians, Danes, and Dutch, in a demonstration against the Swedes, who had been capturing our merchant vessels trading to St. Petersburg, though at the time we were not at war with them. It is interesting to note that Anson here had an opportunity of seeing Peter the Great, and, indeed, was under his command ; the Russian Czar having been appointed, out of

deference to his rank and position, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Fleets.

On the return of the squadron to England, Anson's commission was confirmed, and in the following year he again went to the Baltic with the fleet under Admiral Sir George Byng.

In 1718, while second lieutenant of the *Montague*, he had the good fortune to take part in Sir George Byng's action against the Spanish fleet off Cape Passaro, which resulted in a great victory and the capture and destruction of thirteen of their ships of the line. Four years after this he obtained the command of his first ship, the *Weazle*, sloop, and in her he was successfully employed during most of the year 1722 in suppressing the extensive smuggling which was then being carried on from the ports of Holland. In the following year he was sent out as captain of the *Scarborough* to South Carolina; the mission entrusted to him was to protect our trade from the depredations of pirates, and to keep a watchful eye on the Spanish cruisers which were reported to be molesting our shipping and possessions on those coasts.

Later on, in 1726, while still on the South Carolina station, he received orders from the Admiralty to burn, sink, and destroy all Spanish ships he came across. This was in consequence of an attempt the Spaniards were then making to recover Gibraltar; but the attempt failed, and in 1727 the preliminaries of peace were signed.

Anson continued to serve, on and off, on the South Carolina station until the year 1735, and although he had had no opportunity of showing his fighting qualities, he had, nevertheless, proved himself an able and energetic officer, and had attracted special notice by the ability and discretion with which he had carried out his orders. He had made himself exceedingly popular with the settlers, and to this day Anson County remains as a record of his stay in Carolina.

On his return to England he was allowed a holiday of several months' duration, for the first time for nineteen years; and it was not until the year 1737 that he was appointed captain of the *Centurion*, 60 guns. In this vessel, which was destined to play such a prominent part in his subsequent career,

Anson sailed for the coast of Africa under orders to protect our merchants in those parts against the annoyances to which they were being subjected by the French. This difficult mission he carried out with complete success, obliging the French to desist from their attacks on our trade, but without coming to any open rupture with them. After inspecting the forts and trading-stations along the coast of Guinea, he proceeded to Barbadoes, where he was to expect his orders. On his arrival he found that he was to return to England at once to assume an important command.

In October, 1739, the long-expected war with Spain at last broke out,* and the Government decided to despatch an expedition against the richest and most distant Spanish possessions. Anson was given the command, his squadron consisting of six men-of-war—the *Centurion*, 60 guns ; the *Gloucester*, 50 guns ; the *Severn*, 50 guns ; the *Pearl*, 40 guns ; the *Wager*, 28 guns ; and the *Trial*, sloop, 8 guns ; besides two store-ships which were to accompany the expedition. On the 10th of January, 1740, he received his commission, and was directed to proceed to the South Seas, there to attack the Spanish possessions, which at the time were quite unprepared and defenceless. His orders were to make friends with the Indians and Spanish settlers in Peru, to try and induce them to revolt and to attack Panama. He was further directed to co-operate, if possible, with the British force which was being sent, under Admiral Vernon, against Portobello ; and finally, after attempting the capture of the Spanish treasure-ship, the *Acapulco* galleon, he was to find his way home, if advisable, by way of China.

It was not, however, until the following September that Anson was able to put to sea. Such a deplorable want of organisation and forethought prevailed at the time in our naval administration, that sufficient men could not be found to man the squadron ; and even when the ships' crews and the land forces were finally completed, they were mainly composed of invalid sailors taken from the hospitals, of old Chelsea Hospital pensioners, and of undisciplined and raw marine

* See above, p. 83.

recruits who had never fired off a gun. With this wretched material—about 2000 men in all—Anson started on his celebrated voyage. Captain Mahan writes in ‘The Influence of Sea Power on History’—

“To realise the condition of ships’ companies of that day, it will be necessary only to read the accounts of those sent to Anson, starting for a cruise ‘round the world. It was not a question of sanitation only; the material sent was entirely unfit to meet the conditions of sea-life under the most favourable conditions.”

But Anson was not to be discouraged, however insurmountable the obstacles might appear; and in the end his firm determination and undaunted courage carried him successfully through dangers and difficulties such as had seldom fallen to the lot of any English commander.

It would be impossible within the compass of this article to give a detailed account of all the adventures and misfortunes which befell the squadron. The story is well known, and finds its place in the history of England. Anson’s narrative of his voyage round the world was one of the most popular books of the day, and in recent years Dr. Macaulay’s book, ‘From Middy to Admiral of the Fleet,’ gives a most excellent account of the voyage in a condensed form.

Owing to the great delay in equipping the squadron, it arrived at Cape Horn at the worst time of year, during the equinoctial gales. Fearful storms, accompanied by the most bitter cold, were encountered, and the ravages of scurvy claimed so many victims that there were hardly sufficient men left alive to navigate the squadron. The ships were driven apart by the bad weather, and the *Severn* and *Pearl* suffered such damage that they were compelled to turn back and go home, whilst the *Wager* was wrecked on a small desert island.

With only three ships, and with crews decimated by illness, after refreshing at Juan Fernandez—the island on which Alexander Selkirk had lived—Anson once more set forth northwards along the coast of South America. After capturing several prizes, and taking and burning the town of Paita, he obtained information that Vernon’s attack on Carthagena had failed. This made any co-operation between the two

British expeditions impossible, so he proceeded to the coast of California in the hope of intercepting the Acapulco galleon ; but renewed ill-luck pursued him, and the galleon escaped.

Undeterred by all the misfortunes he had experienced, he started, in April, 1742, with the *Centurion* and *Gloucester* to cross the then but little known Pacific Ocean. The *Trial* was scuttled and sunk, as it was found impossible to keep her any longer afloat. Of a thousand men who had composed the crews of the *Centurion*, *Gloucester*, and *Trial* on leaving England, not more than four hundred remained alive.

On the voyage across the Pacific Ocean the *Gloucester* became totally unseaworthy, and had to be abandoned and burnt, her ship's company being transferred to the *Centurion*. Fortunately, the Island of Tinian was reached in time to recruit the health of the men who had suffered severely, owing to a renewed outbreak of scurvy. During their stay at Tinian, and while the Commodore was himself on land recovering from an attack of scurvy, the *Centurion* was driven from her anchorage out to sea with only a small and sickly crew on board her. Though Anson kept up the spirits of the men, the position seemed desperate. They were on a desert island more than a thousand miles from the nearest port, without even a compass left them, having only a small Spanish vessel of fifteen tons which they had captured off the island. Anson employed his men in lengthening this vessel by twelve feet for the forlorn hope of a voyage in it to China. The date for their start was fixed, when one day the *Centurion* was sighted making for the island again, three weeks after she had been blown out to sea. Anson flung down his axe and left the work, now fortunately unnecessary, and prepared instead for the voyage in his own ship.

Macao was reached in November, 1742. After innumerable delays caused by difficulties with the Chinese, the *Centurion*, which had been thoroughly overhauled and rendered water-tight, once more started out of port, in April, 1743, ostensibly to return to England. No sooner, however, had Anson reached the open sea, than he called his crew together and explained to them that he intended to alter the ship's course and to

cruise off Manila in the hope of capturing the galleon which was due there every year from Acapulco.

For some weeks they cruised off the Philippine Islands watching for the galleon, and during that time the crew, which numbered only 227 all told, including Lascars and boys—about half the proper complement—were constantly exercised in firing the big guns and muskets at marks. At last, on the 20th June, what appeared to be two sails were sighted, and Anson at once exclaimed, "My lads, we will fight them both!" But there proved to be only one ship, after all. A stubborn fight at close quarters ensued. The galleon was captured, with over 500 prisoners and an immense treasure, while the Spanish commander handed over his sword—which is now in the writer's possession—to the victor. The Spanish prisoners outnumbered the crew of the *Centurion* by more than two to one, and the difficulty of guarding them was very great, but eventually the Commodore succeeded in arriving at Macao with his prize and her rich cargo.

The Chinese again gave a great deal of trouble, refusing to supply provisions or to provide the necessary men for repairing and refitting the ship. Finally, therefore, Anson demanded, and insisted on obtaining, an interview with the Chinese Viceroy at Canton. After innumerable delays the audience took place. The Commodore and his small retinue, who were dressed up for the occasion in their best, were received in great state in the Audience Hall of the Palace, thousands of troops in gorgeous uniforms lining the approaches. It must be borne in mind that this was the first occasion on which a British man-of-war had ever entered a Chinese port; and it was entirely owing to Anson's determination and persistence that England's rights were then conceded. The Viceroy accepted Anson's conditions, one of which was that he should not pay any duty for anchoring a British man-of-war in any Chinese port. Thus the principle of "the open door" was first secured by Anson. It is much to be hoped that our statesmen will never allow it to be closed!

Anson finally reached England in June, 1744, having been away three years and nine months. War had meanwhile

broken out with France, and his last adventure was to pass safely, during a fog, through the French fleet, which was cruising in the Channel. The expedition, certainly, had not carried out to the full the objects for which it had been designed and sent out ; but this was mainly due to its inferior equipment, and to the delay that had occurred before it was ready to start. The Spaniards, through their spies, were consequently enabled to gain timely information, and to warn their colonies of Anson's approach, and they also fitted out a squadron of six men-of-war, under Admiral Pizarro, with 3000 men, to intercept him. The misfortunes, however, which overtook the Spanish squadron exceeded even those of Anson's, and resulted in the practical annihilation of the entire force. Terrible storms overtook them, starvation threatened them, and, to add to all these troubles, a mutiny broke out ; finally, only one of the ships succeeded in returning to Spain—the rest were lost, or had to be abandoned.

Thus the injury inflicted on Spain, both directly and indirectly, by Anson's expedition was very considerable ; a formidable squadron had been diverted from other objects, and rendered useless, while a vast amount of treasure was captured, and serious loss inflicted on Spanish commerce.

The famous voyage is thus alluded to by Captain Mahan—

“ Its very misfortunes, and the persistency which worked out a great success from them all, have given it a well-deserved renown.”

For many a long year the story of that voyage will continue to inspire rising generations of Englishmen to emulate the deeds of old, and Commodore Anson's name will always be handed down among the greatest navigators in history.

On his arrival in England, Anson was received by the King, and treated as a popular hero by his fellow-countrymen ; promotion to the rank of rear-admiral over the heads of fifty-five captains senior to him in the Service was promptly offered to him. But here his independence of character and sense of justice displayed themselves.

In September, 1743, when he was on the point of visiting the Viceroy at Canton, in order to provide for all possible

eventualities, he handed over the command of the *Centurion* to his first lieutenant, Piercy Brett, and conferred on him the acting rank of captain. The Admiralty contended that he had exceeded his instructions, and had no power to make the appointment. Anson's reply was—

“It has ever been my opinion that a person entrusted with command may, and ought to, exceed his orders, and dispense with the common rule of proceedings when extraordinary occasions require it.”

Such was Anson's view ; and such was Nelson's, who frequently during the course of his career acted in the manner described. Many of the greatest deeds in our country's history could never have been accomplished had not our great men been prepared to incur the responsibility of “exceeding their orders and dispensing with the common rule of proceedings” whenever the occasion demanded.

The Admiralty refused to ratify Brett's appointment, and in consequence Anson, in order to mark his sense of the injustice of their action, declined to accept the promotion to rear-admiral that had been offered to him. His action was characteristic of the man, and might have been the cause of serious injury to his otherwise successful career. He was for a short time placed, as a captain, on the half-pay list, but before the end of the year there came a change of Ministry. The Duke of Bedford was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, and invited Anson to join his Board as one of the Lords of the Admiralty. Two steps at once, with promotion to the rank of Rear-admiral of the White, now fell to the lot of Anson, whilst Brett's commission was confirmed as from the date of his appointment at Canton in September, 1743.

This incident brings out in strong relief Anson's determination and courage in upholding the just claims of those serving under his command, even at grave risk to his own personal interests. After two years at the Admiralty we find him, in the autumn of 1746, taking command of the Channel fleet, and during most of that winter he was cruising off the coast of France in the hope of intercepting a French fleet under the Duc D'Anville, which was returning after an unsuccessful attempt to recapture Louisbourg. During the dreary weeks

of winter cruising, on the look-out for the enemy's appearance, he exercised his fleet and ships' companies in various manœuvres with a discipline hitherto unknown in the Service. He writes to the Duke of Bedford—

“My men begin to be sickly, and most of the ships very foul, but the hopes of destroying some of the enemy's fleet will make me risk health and everything else.”

An accident robbed him, however, of the prize he had been so patiently waiting for.

In a letter to the Duke of Bedford, written some months after, he explains how D'Anville escaped him—

“How cordially have I cursed the Dutch, who, I find (by the French general, Jonquière), prevented his whole fleet falling into my hands the last winter when he came from Chibaton,* by one of their vessels informing him he was within twenty leagues of me, and must see me the next morning, upon which he altered his course and steered for Rochefort.”

The active state of efficiency to which Anson had brought both the Navy and the administration of the Admiralty were, however, before long to bear fruit and to enable him to strike a well-thought-out and crushing blow against France. The Admiralty received information that two powerful expeditions were being fitted out, the one to strengthen the French forces in the East Indies, and the other to attempt to re-take Louisbourg.

In the hope of intercepting these expeditions, Anson, in command of a fine fleet, set sail in April, 1747. He cruised for some time off Ushant and Brest, having previously detached two frigates to Rochefort, with instructions to bring him immediate information if they sighted the French.

The fleet under his command, which included fifteen sail of the line besides frigates, was spread out, with a distance of a mile between each ship, so as to cover as large an area as possible, and thus reduce the chances of the enemy slipping away undiscovered. On the 3rd May, when off Cape Finisterre, a large French fleet was sighted. Anson immediately called in his cruisers and started off to intercept the enemy. At noon it

* Halifax.

to Anson's well-laid plans, the two expeditions were defeated and captured at one blow.

The battle was over by seven o'clock in the evening, and in handing over his sword to Anson, the French admiral made use of the following words: "Monsieur, vous avez vaincu *L'Invincible* et *La Gloire* vous suit." This was an allusion to two of the captured French ships named *La Gloire* and *L'Invincible*. Of the latter Anson writes—

"She is a prodigious fine ship, and vastly large. I think she is longer than any ship in our fleet, and quite new."

All the French ships captured were added to the British Navy. A great quantity of treasure was taken, and immense damage was done to the enemy by the destruction of the two expeditions, which were reckoned to have cost a million and a half sterling.

Thus Anson's dispositions both for waylaying these expeditions and for capturing them were completely successful. In achieving this result he had broken through the old traditions of the British Navy with regard to maintaining the line of battle, and by the order for a general chase he was able to destroy the enemy's fleet and win a decisive victory.

Captain Mahan alludes to this action as follows:—

"The action which resulted was a *mêlée*—there was no opportunity for anything else; the one thing necessary was to overtake the running enemy."

And again—

"One tactical lesson is afforded, that when an enemy, either as the result of battle or from original inequality, is greatly inferior in force, and obliged to fly without standing on the order of his flying, the regard otherwise due to order must be, in a measure at least, dismissed."

It will be interesting also to quote the opinion of Rear-Admiral Warren, who was second in command, as to Anson's dispositions. He writes to the Duke of Bedford on the 18th May, 1747, a few days after the battle—

"I well know his modesty will not suffer him to acquaint you that it was owing, under God, to his own good conduct as an officer; I cannot,

in justice to his high merit, avoid doing it. In my life I never served with more pleasure, nor saw half such pains taken to discipline the fleet : while I have the honour to continue in it I will endeavour to follow his example, however short I may fall of it ; and wish to be commanded by him rather than command myself."

The news of the victory was received in England with great rejoicings ; no such blow had been inflicted on the French at sea since the battle of La Hogue, more than fifty years before. On his return Anson was given a splendid reception. The King received him in audience, personally thanked him, and created him a peer as Lord Anson of Soberton in Hants ; he was also promoted to the rank of Vice-Admiral of the White. Warren received the K.B. for his share in the action.

Owing to the sound judgment and practical knowledge displayed by Anson in all naval matters, he had exercised great influence at the Admiralty from the time of his appointment. Both the Duke of Bedford and the Earl of Sandwich, the two First Lords under whom he served from 1744 to 1751, placed implicit confidence in him, and allowed themselves to be guided by him in all matters relating to the administrative control of the Navy.

On his return to the Admiralty, in June, 1747, he was soon engaged in again preparing a powerful squadron to intercept a French fleet and convoy, whose destination was understood to be the West Indies. Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Warren was in the first instance appointed to the command, but on his retirement through illness, Rear-Admiral Hawke obtained the command. This gallant officer, who had just received his flag rank, was the only captain who had distinguished himself in the unfortunate action of Mathews and Lestock in 1744,* and his selection over the heads of many of his senior officers was mainly Anson's doing. The brilliant victory gained by Hawke over the French fleet off Cape Finisterre in the following October was an ample justification of Hawke's appointment, and from that time he was continually given the most important commands, and finally proved

* See below, pp. 126-128.

himself, by his decisive victory over the French in Quiberon Bay in 1759, to be the greatest of the brilliant band of naval commanders selected by Anson's advice to fight and win our battles during the Seven Years' War.

In the year 1757, when Anson resumed his place as First Lord of the Admiralty, after being out of office for a few months, he was anxious to give Sir Edward a seat at the Board, as will be seen from the following extract from a letter written by Lady Anson to her husband :—

“ I could almost answer for your having no particular wish but with respect to Sir Edward Hawke.”

But the Ministry, which was destined to achieve such unexampled successes for the country, was essentially a coalition Ministry, and compromises had to be agreed to. It was part of the bargain that Anson should retain the members of the old Board of Admiralty, of whom Admiral Boscawen was one, and consequently room could not be found for Hawke. Writing to Lord Anson with reference to Hawke's unsuccessful attempt against Rochefort, Lady Anson's words are—

“ Sir Edward will, I dare say, always appear to act with good sense, courage, and zeal for the service of his country ; you have, I know, always particularly esteemed his worth.”

The fact was, the failure was due to the general commanding the land forces, more than to any other cause ; but Hawke at the time received an unmerited share of the blame.

Anson married, in 1748, Elizabeth, daughter of the first Earl of Hardwicke, Lord Chancellor of England. His wife was a most gifted and talented woman. There is ample evidence to show that their married life was an extremely happy one. They lived first at Carshalton, and afterwards at Moor Park in Hertfordshire, but the greater part of their time was spent at the Admiralty. Lady Anson died in 1760, two years before her husband. There were no children by the marriage. Lord Anson at his death left his fortune to his elder brother, Thomas Anson of Shugborough, and M.P. for Lichfield, who survived him some ten years.

In the autumn of 1748 the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was concluded, and for the next few years Anson devoted himself to effecting many much-needed reforms in the administration of the Admiralty, and especially in placing the Navy on a more satisfactory footing, both as regarded the ships themselves and the crews necessary for manning them. In 1751 he was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty, a position which he continued to fill, with the exception of a short interval of seven months, until his death, in 1762.

Among the more important reforms carried out by the Admiralty, and for which credit must be given to Anson, the following may be mentioned: In 1745, in consequence of the great complaints made against the lines on which the ships of our Navy were then built (it being affirmed—and with reason—that they were not equal in seaworthy qualities to those of the same size built by France and Spain), new plans and dimensions for ships of every class were carefully worked out and approved by the Board of Admiralty. Again, in the year 1756, still further improvements in the draught and dimensions of ships were effected. In 1761 Anson ordered a ship to be sheathed with copper for the first time; this important and much-needed improvement did not, however, become general in the Navy until several years later.

We can hardly imagine such a thing as naval officers on active service without any regular uniform, yet it was not until the year 1747 that a uniform dress for the Navy was chosen and ordered to be worn—a much-needed innovation, tending towards the increased orderliness and discipline of the Service.

Again, in the same year (1747) Anson was instrumental in passing a very important scheme with relation to the promotion and retirement of naval officers. Up to that time the total number of flag officers on the list only amounted to twenty-one, consequently but few captains in the Service could ever hope to attain flag rank. Under the new scheme it was enacted that, on captains being selected for promotion to active flag rank, those captains who were passed over should be promoted to be rear-admirals on half pay without

being named as of the Red, White, or Blue squadrons. This reform proved a great boon to the Service, and by offering better terms of promotion, gave encouragement and hope to all ; its principles are in force at the present time.

The formation of the Corps of Marines in 1755, a body which has since undergone little or no change in its constitution, is entirely due to Anson. Up to then regiments had been specially raised from time to time for naval service as the occasion required, only to be disbanded again when their services could be dispensed with. This system was most unsatisfactory, and resulted in undisciplined and raw troops being constantly employed with unsatisfactory results to the country. The new Corps of Marines, to which so much of the success of our Navy has since been due, consisted of 18,000 men ; it was formed as a separate corps, distinct from the Army, and entirely under the orders of the naval authorities.

To Anson it is also due that an Act was passed confirming the authority of Courts-Martial as independent tribunals in their own sphere. Lord Chief Justice Willes had declared the verdict of a Court-Martial to be illegal and unconstitutional, and he issued warrants for the members comprising it to be taken into custody. Anson resisted this high-handed action with such good results that the King expressed great displeasure at the insult offered to the Court-Martial ; the Act referred to was shortly afterwards introduced and passed, and the independence of Courts-Martial has been maintained ever since.

Up to this time there had been no systematic inspection of the dockyards and other naval establishments ; consequently the control had been very inefficient, and much public money had been wasted. Anson initiated a system of official inspection by the members of the Board of Admiralty once in every two years. Many other measures also were carried, such as the Act which provided for the improved manning of the Navy, by raising the pay and increasing the comforts of the seamen. The "Articles of War" were passed in 1749, and remained the law of the Service down to the year 1865.

War with France again broke out in 1755, and Anson, together with the Duke of Cumberland and Fox, were appointed a Committee of the Cabinet to conduct the preparations for war and to arrange all naval and military operations. The one unfortunate event of Anson's administration was the selection of Admiral Byng, who, though not deficient in personal courage, was quite incompetent to command the expedition to Minorca, with a fleet, too, not well found or manned. For the disastrous loss of Minorca, Byng himself was answerable; but Anson cannot altogether be acquitted of error in the choice of the commander. With the much more culpable premier, he went out of office for a time, but returned to office in June, 1757, and by his naval administration and his brilliant choice of commanders more than retrieved whatever reputation he had lost by Byng's unfortunate expedition. Our Navy was in a state of readiness such as had never existed before, and in a short time large fleets were manned and sent out under the command of Boscawen and Hawke. It is impossible to give in detail all the episodes connected with that war, which, if we except the expedition to Rochefort in 1757—and for that failure the generals, not the admiral, were responsible*—was to prove so glorious for the British Navy. Suffice it to state that in the spring of 1758 Anson was once again afloat in command of a great fleet of line-of-battle ships, and for some months he cruised off Brest in order to keep the French in their ports and thus prevent them from interfering with our operations against St. Malo, Cherbourg, and St. Cas. The sea-power of the French was, however, so utterly impotent at the time by reason of the great superiority of our fleets, that there was little likelihood of fresh laurels for Anson. Yet, although it was mainly in consequence of his own skilful preparations that this satisfactory state of affairs existed, the admiral appears, nevertheless, to have been not a little disappointed. That he would have liked to deal the enemy another direct blow is made evident by the following letter from his brother, Thomas Anson, who wrote to him from Shugborough, July 23, 1758—

* See below, pp. 133, 134.

"I was very happy to hear from you, tho' I can by no means enter into the concern you express for your disappointment, and I flatter myself that upon further reflection it will vanish. Nothing, surely, remains to be added to your fame in commanding Squadrons ; a discipline unknown before, a new manner of cruising, and a decisive way of engaging the Enemy (which, by-the-by, I am glad to hear Howe has imitated), have already secured you all the merit of that kind in its largest extent. Then to frame and to direct the whole Plan is much more glorious to yourself, as well as more beneficial to the Public, than to execute with all the ability and success imaginable only a part of it."

The attempts on the French coast were not so successful as they might have been had our generals displayed more courage and determination, but on the whole the object aimed at was achieved. Lady Anson writes from the Admiralty to her husband at sea on this point as follows (July, 1758) :—

"And it is a comfort to hear that Prince Ferdinand writes word that the alarm it has given in France has been of great service to him, in preventing the French from augmenting the army on the Lower Rhine with many troops, which they have been obliged to keep at home, and he therefore desires the enterprise may be continued."

The cruise in which the First Lord was engaged did not terminate till the autumn, when he handed over the command to Vice-Admiral Saunders. The somewhat unusual conditions which existed, owing to the fact that Lord Anson was First Lord of the Admiralty as well as Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet, are shown in another letter from Lady Anson, Sept. 1, 1758—

"I understand the letter from Mr. Pitt, which this scrawl will accompany, is rather a full power than an order for your return ; for he said your situation at the Admiralty and in the Navy was such, and your going to sea so rightly and handsomely upon this occasion, so much your own Act and Deed, that he did not know how to recall you or take away your Command by a positive order, but must leave it to yourself."

In the autumn of the year 1761 Lord Anson undertook his last command at sea. With a squadron of men-of-war he escorted Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburgh from Cuxhaven to Harwich, upon the occasion of her marriage to King George III. Anson died suddenly in June, 1762, having seen nearly fifty years of active service at sea, and having served

under four different sovereigns. He was a Privy Councillor, an Elder Brother of the Trinity House, a Governor of the Charter-house, and Lord High Steward of Plymouth. On two occasions, during the King's visits to Hanover, he acted as one of the Lords Justices, and in the year 1749 was appointed Vice-Admiral of Great Britain by the King. In those days there was only one Admiral of the Fleet, an appointment which he received in 1761, over the head of the senior admiral on the list.

During the time that Anson exercised control at the Admiralty he displayed in a remarkable degree the gift of quickly discerning promise in young officers and of selecting the most capable men for important commands without regard to their seniority. A great measure of the success then obtained by the Navy must be put down to his judicious selections and appointments. Hawke, Boscawen, and Saunders, among the men more of Anson's own age, are the most conspicuous examples of his discernment; while of the younger men the names of Keppel, Rodney, and Howe stand out in like manner.

Rodney writes to Lord Anson off Antigua on March 25, 1762—

"If I am so happy to meet with your Lordship's approbation for hastening with so strong a squadron to the assistance of Jamaica, it will give me most sincere pleasure. My first and greatest motive for such a step is in a great measure to convince your Lordship of my gratitude to you for promoting me to so great a Command, as I am sensible how liable a person of your Lordship's rank and station is to the clamour of the people upon any unforeseen accidents, and shall therefore esteem it as the happiest event of my life if I can preserve the Island and your Lordship from unjust censure."

Lady Anson, in a letter dated July 11, 1758, makes the following allusion to Howe, who had just returned with his squadron after the attempt on St. Malo:—

"He told me he was very well received here, and that he had assured Mr. Pitt that he had no ambition but not to disgrace your recommendation of him."

The influence Anson exercised over those officers who

were brought much in contact with him, or who had had the good fortune to serve under him, was remarkable, and the Navy owes much to him for the successful training of so many distinguished naval commanders. The list of those who served under him on the *Centurion* on his expedition round the world is an extremely brilliant one, and, as composing the crew of a ship of not more than 1000 tons, has probably never been surpassed:—

Admiral Sir Charles Saunders, First Lord of the Admiralty ;
Admiral Viscount Keppel, First Lord of the Admiralty ;
Vice-Admiral Sir Piercy Brett, a Naval Lord of the Admiralty ;
Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Dennis, Bart. ;
Vice-Admiral Sir Hyde Parker ;
Vice-Admiral John Campbell ;
Captain Philip Saumarez (killed in action in 1747) ;

while Admiral Earl Howe, and Admiral John Byron, the grandfather of the poet, in the *Severn* and *Wager* respectively, both took part in that celebrated expedition under his command.

A few years later two other great naval commanders, Earl St. Vincent and Viscount Duncan, started their professional career in Anson's school. The former was the son of a neighbour of Anson's in Staffordshire ; they both received from him their first commissions as lieutenants in the year 1755.

Anson was no orator, neither was he a great statesman ; he was merely one of the ablest seamen and naval administrators that England has ever produced. He seldom, if ever, took part in Parliamentary debates, either as Member for Heydon or in the House of Lords. Though, as has been shown, he originated many important naval reforms, he left it to others to carry the work through Parliament. Sailor first, politician afterwards. A Whig from family traditions and by inclination, he yet served at the Admiralty through successive Administrations from December, 1744, until his death in 1762—seventeen consecutive years, with only one break of a few months ending in June, 1757, when he was reinstated as First Lord of the Admiralty by Pitt. That great statesman had been opposed to him in politics, and

had himself moved for an inquiry with reference to the dispositions made by the Board of Admiralty, with Anson at their head, at the time preceding Byng's failure to relieve Port Mahon in June, 1756. In reference to that inquiry and to the censure that was at the time passed on Anson for not having provided a stronger fleet in the Mediterranean, it will be sufficient to quote Pitt's own words spoken in the House of Lords in 1770—

“Consult the returns that were laid before Parliament in the year 1756. I was one of those who urged a Parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of the Ministry. That Ministry, my Lords, in the midst of universal censure and reproach, had honour and virtue enough to promote the inquiry themselves. They scorned to evade it by the mean expedient of putting a previous question. Upon the strictest inquiry it appeared [that the diligence they had used in sending a squadron to the Mediterranean, and in their other naval preparations, was beyond all example.”

Pitt went on to say—

“I replaced Lord Anson at the Admiralty, and I thank God that I had resolution enough to do so.”

Anson was out of office, at the time both of the trial and execution of Admiral Byng, and was therefore in no way responsible for the extreme sentence carried out on that unfortunate man. Anson was not fond of writing; he only put his pen to paper on rare occasions, when there was absolute necessity for doing so. The following letter will furnish an example, and was written in October, 1761, to Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Saunders, then in command of the Mediterranean squadron:—

“DEAR SIR,

“Mr. Secretary Pitt having resigned the Seals, it becomes necessary for the present Administration to think of the best means of employing all our force by sea and land against France. An immediate object being wanted, I desire you will with the utmost secrecy inform yourself of the strength of Marseilles, whether it is attackable, and what land and sea force will be necessary for that service. It may easily be masked under the idea of retaking Port Mahon. If you can suggest any other place within the Mediterranean that you may think an object, you will mention it in your answer. It is thought by some people here that

Spain has an inclination to declare war against us. I own I am not of that opinion, not seeing what advantage Spain can promise themselves from the measure, nor do I think their weight would be great, though it was thrown into the scale of France in the present conjuncture.

"I have his Majesty's commands to inform you that he thinks it necessary for his Service that you should keep the principal part of your Squadron at or near Gibraltar, where, if a Spanish war should happen, you may expect to be reinforced. Lord Howe proposed a scheme to Mr. Pitt, in case of a rupture with Spain to attack the Spanish Fleet in the Bay of Cadiz, and proposed in case they went into the Puntales to shelter themselves, to follow them and destroy them there. It was certainly a gallant proposal; how fit and proper it may be to attempt it if a war should happen you must inform me, for I never was at Cadiz. If you will procure the best Plan you can of the Port of Cadiz, and make your remarks upon it yourself, it will be the best way of your conveying your Idea to me. I must desire you will give me a very particular account of the Spanish Fleet, what part of it is at Cadiz, and equipped for Service, as well as at the other different Ports. I should likewise be glad to know what may be their whole number of seamen, and the state of their stores. You see by this letter being written in my own scrawl, that I think it so necessary to be kept secret that I have not thought it right to trust it even to the Secretaries of the Admiralty. I am sure it is needless to tell you that nobody living can esteem you more than your humble servant,

"ANSON.

"P.S.—You will send the frigate back with your answer."

War with Spain broke out three months after the above letter was written; but although it was of short duration, Anson's death occurred before the conclusion of peace; thus he did not live to hear of the successful issue of the expeditions he had sent out against Havana and the Philippine Islands.

Admiral Sir George Pocock writes to him, under date July 17, 1762—

"Nothing will give me greater pleasure than to acquaint your Lordship with the reduction of the Havana. It is certain Lord Albemarle* exerts himself to the utmost, and is indefatigable; Commodore Keppel has been extremely serviceable in the direction of affairs under his inspection, and merits reward."

Vice-Admiral Cornish again, writing off Cavita, November 1, 1762, says—

"It affords me the most sensible pleasure to congratulate you on the

* Commanding the Land Forces.

success of his Majesty's arms in the reduction of Manila with its dependencies. The possession of the Port of Cavita is an acquisition of great consequence to the squadron. . . . I am very sorry to mention that the Company's* servants at Madras took every method in their power to obstruct the expedition ; their behaviour on this occasion was shameful."

Both these letters were written to Lord Anson in ignorance that his death had already occurred.

The great and enduring character of Anson's services to the Navy of this country cannot be over-estimated. In his early days at sea he found both the efficiency and the administration of the Navy at a very low ebb. But by the example he set in the conduct of his celebrated voyage, and by his subsequent victory over the French fleet in 1747, he materially helped to bring it successfully through the state of transition in which it was involved, until, with increased *esprits de corps* and discipline, it developed under his guidance, at the end of the Seven Years' War, into that splendid organisation which, at the time of his death, had never been equalled, and was more than a match for the united navies of the whole world. Owing to the supremacy of our sea-power we had conquered Canada, and had further wrested from France her settlements in the East and West Indies, and on the west coast of Africa. Havana and Manila, Spain's choicest possessions, had also fallen into our hands. Captain Mahan explains how this glorious position was achieved—

"Her arms were triumphant during this short contest through the rapidity with which her projects were carried into execution, due to the state of efficiency to which her naval forces and administration had been brought. . . . At the end of seven years the Kingdom of Great Britain had become the British Empire."

In order to show to whose credit this state of affairs is justly due, we cannot quote a greater or more reliable authority than Pitt himself. In 1770, as Earl of Chatham in the House of Lords, he said—

"I . . . draw my information from the greatest and most respectable naval authority that has ever existed in this country. I mean the late

* The East India Company.

Lord Anson. To his wisdom, to his experience and care (and I speak it with pleasure), the nation owes the glorious successes of the last war."

Thus Great Britain's undoubted supremacy on the seas was first assured and established by Anson and the elder Pitt—a position which was still further strengthened, nearly half a century later, by Nelson and the younger Pitt, and which is being fully maintained at the present time by the united will of the British nation.

Anson was buried privately in the parish church of his old home in Staffordshire, in the family vault of the Ansons. Up to 1897 there was no record of the fact, but in that year, the bicentenary of his birth, the omission was somewhat tardily rectified by the erection of a brass memorial tablet in Colwich Church, placed there by public subscription.

NOTE.—I have consulted Sir John Barrow's 'Life of Anson,' and many other authorities bearing on the subject. The letters from which extracts have been quoted are as under—

Anson's letter to Admiralty, 1744—Barrow's 'Life of Anson.'

Anson's and Warren's letters in 1746 and 1747—Bedford Correspondence, vol. i.

Lord Anson to Saunders; Thomas Anson, Lady Anson, Rodney, Cornish, Pocock, to Lord Anson;—all in my possession at Shugborough.

Pitt's speech, 1770—Hansard's 'Parliamentary History,' vol. xvi.

VII.

ADMIRAL THE LORD HAWKE.

BY THE LORD HAWKE AND L. G. CARR LAUGHTON.

IT is not merely as a particularly brilliant and successful commander that Admiral Lord Hawke is remembered ; his name also stands as the great landmark from which the modern Navy has taken its departure. Among his contemporaries there were other great seamen, but of the illustrious trio, Hawke, Anson, and Boscawen, that raised the Navy of George II. from the slough into which it had been allowed to fall, it may be held that Hawke, by the promptitude of his genius, by his stubborn integrity, by his intimate knowledge of the Navy's wants, and by the kindly thoughtfulness that pointed out their remedies, was the greatest.

Edward Hawke, the admiral's father, was by profession a barrister, and by descent a Cornishman ; he married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Nathaniel Bladen, barrister (a descendant of the old Yorkshire family of the Bladens of Hemsworth), by his wife Isabella, second daughter of Sir William Fairfax, of Steeton. Colonel Martin Bladen, the admiral's maternal uncle, was the public man of the family ; he had been controller of the Mint, and afterwards held for many years the office of Commissioner of Trade and Plantations ; he sat for Portsmouth in five Parliaments, and eventually became a Privy Councillor. This was the man whose ward Hawke became on the death of his father in 1718, and under whose auspices the boy went to sea, much as Nelson did fifty years later, under the guidance of Maurice Suckling. Till lately it was believed that Hawke was born in 1716, and much comment has been made in consequence upon the rapidity of



Hawke

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDWARD ADMIRAL LORD HAWKE.

From an Engraving by J. Hall of the Painting by Francis Cotes, R. A.

his promotion. Had this been the case, he would have been on 20th February, 1719-20, the date of his entry into the Navy, three years old; and though it would have been no unheard-of thing for a boy in the nursery to be borne on a ship's books, it is as well to point out that such was not the case. As the true date of his birth was 1705, Hawke first went afloat in his fifteenth year. Thus he had no undue start of his contemporaries in the race for promotion, and, as will presently appear, went up the ladder at no extraordinary rate.* The influence of his uncle combined with his own merit to lift him out of the ruck of those unfortunate officers who never rose above subordinate rank, but, during the long peace, he passed quite time enough in the lower grades of his profession to become a thorough seaman in every way. There can be no doubt that it was to his long and hard training that the brilliant success of his after career was largely due.

It will be noticed that the whole of Hawke's early service was passed during a period of profound peace, when the Navy was allowed to fall a long way below its proper standard, and when many officers were unable to find employment. It is therefore worth noticing that, from the time when he entered as a volunteer on board the *Seahorse*, with Captain Thomas Durell, he was almost continuously employed. In the *Seahorse* he remained for five years, serving on the North American and West Indian station. In 1725 he returned to England and passed his examination, following which he joined the *Kinsale* with the rating of A.B., and in her went first to the West Coast of Africa, and then again to the West Indies, where the ship was for a month attached to Hosier's unhappy squadron.† The *Kinsale* paid off at Woolwich in July, 1727, and of Hawke's doings for the next two years no trace has, as yet, been discovered: it is suggested, however,‡ that he may have served during this time in

* The details of Hawke's early service were first made public in the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' and were afterwards embodied by Professor Montagu Burrows, in the revised edition of his 'Life of Admiral Lord Hawke,' which is, and will continue to be, the standard work.

† For this unfortunate blockade, see above, p. 84.

‡ Prof. Burrows's 'Life,' 1st ed. p. 113.

the fleet off Gibraltar and Cadiz. On 11th April, 1729, he was promoted to be third lieutenant of the *Portland*, of 50 guns, Captain Rowzier, and in her cruised in the Channel till November, when he was moved into the *Leopard*, whose captain was Peter—afterwards Sir Peter—Warren. But the *Leopard* was paid off a month after Hawke joined her, and he was placed on half-pay till May, 1731, when he joined the *Edinburgh*, Captain Sir Chaloner Ogle, as fourth lieutenant. The *Edinburgh* was attached to Sir Charles Wager's fleet in the Mediterranean, and her commission in 1731 is interesting, as having given Hawke some experience of service in a fleet. Both before this, and for many years afterwards, he was employed almost exclusively in cruising, and though it is possible that he had seen a fleet at Gibraltar, there is no certainty about it. He came home from the Mediterranean on 27th December, and in January following joined his old captain, Durell, in the *Scarborough*, and sailed once more for North America. In December, 1732, he joined the *Kingston*, then flying the broad pennant of Sir Chaloner Ogle at Jamaica, as first lieutenant, and on 13th April, 1733, was promoted by the commodore to command the 14-gun sloop *Wolf*. He remained in command of her for a year, but his service continued to be uneventful. Nevertheless, to hold such a command must have been no sinecure; not only was constant supervision of trade and smuggling necessary, for the war of Jenkins's ear * was now maturing in these waters, but also his ship was of a type ill calculated to withstand the hurricanes of the West Indies. Were this not proved by the great number of these sloops that went to swell our list of losses in the ensuing war, we should have evidence enough in the letters of William Dandridge, who commanded this same sloop in 1738, and in the subsequent wreck of the ship on the Florida coast. From the *Wolf* Hawke was promoted to be captain of the *Flamborough* in March, 1734, and continued in her till she was paid off in England eighteen months later.

He remained ashore on half-pay till war with Spain became imminent four years later, and during this period he

* See above, p. 83.

married. The lady was Catharine, daughter and sole heir of Walter Brooke, Esq., of Burton Hall, Co. York; she was connected with the Bladens, and brought her husband various properties, from one of which his title was subsequently derived. The marriage was solemnized in 1737 in the private chapel of Somerset House, both bride and bridegroom being described as "of Kensington." * Hawke was at this time thirty-two, and his wife seventeen. Of six children two only survived him, his eldest son and successor Martin Bladen Hawke, and a daughter Catharine. Lady Hawke died in 1756.

On 30th July, 1739, a few days after Vernon sailed for Porto Bello, † Hawke commissioned the *Portland*, 50, in which he had served under Captain Rowzier ten years before, and sailed once more for the West Indies. Vernon's expedition is not famous for reputations made, and Hawke luckily had nothing to do with it, being employed entirely on convoy duty during the whole of the four years he was on the station. He fell in with no Spanish men-of-war, and the French preludes to a breach of the peace led only to disaster: thus it so happened that during four years of service afloat in time of war, he saw no fighting whatever. This was, perhaps, not altogether unfortunate, for the *Portland* was an extreme instance of a ship kept in commission when she should have been in the ship-breakers' hands. She was very old and rotten, and so iron-sick that in bad weather all on board were constantly wet through. As a result, she was both unhealthy and dangerous, and when in November, 1741, her rotten masts were blown out of her in a gale off Boston, she was for a time in great peril. However, Hawke continued to cruise in her till January, 1743, when he returned to England. The ship was paid off in March, and soon afterwards was broken up.

Hawke was next appointed, in June, 1743, to command the *Berwick*, a new 70-gun ship, and from this point begins the interesting part of his career. War with France was now

* Nichols, 'Her. and Gen.,' vol. i.

† See above, p. 85.

obviously only a matter of a few months, and the *Berwick* was ordered out to the Mediterranean to reinforce Mathews, who was watching the Spanish fleet, or rather, after its retreat to Toulon in the autumn of 1743, the combined French and Spanish fleets. It is not necessary here to follow the movements of the British fleet, or to trace the history of the ill-will that existed between Admiral Mathews and his second in command, Richard Lestock, and was the cause of two subsequent failures. What did concern Hawke more immediately was the extreme difficulty experienced in raising men. His appointment to the *Berwick* was made in June, but owing to the absence of large numbers of seamen in the Mediterranean, in the Channel, and in the West Indies, it was not till August that he could get a ship's company together. And when it was collected, it was of execrable quality; such seamen as it contained seem to have, for the most part, but lately reached home from the East Indies, while the remainder, in the captain's own words, raked together by the press-gang, consisted of "very little, weakly, puny fellows, that have never been at sea, and can be of little or no service." It was not promising material, and by the time the ship joined the fleet in the roadstead of Hyères on 11th January, 1744, she had lost many men from both scurvy and fever, and it is no small credit to Hawke that the *Berwick* was the most efficient fighting machine in the whole fleet only a month after this date.

And now comes the ill-famed battle of Toulon, where many reputations were lost, and one alone made. On 8th February the joint fleets got under way from Toulon, the French in the van and centre, the Spaniards in the centre and rear. They were followed by the English, but it was not till the 11th that an engagement took place. On that day the enemy, in line ahead, were standing to the southward with a light easterly breeze, and the English were trying to form line to windward. Rear-Admiral Rowley, in whose division was the *Berwick*, commanded the van, Mathews had the centre, while Lestock with the rear was a long way astern. Mathews's intention was to make his attack in accordance

with the fighting instructions, that is, to form line parallel with the enemy, to bear down together, and engage van, centre, and rear. The scheme may still appear to some, as it did then to the official mind, simplicity itself ; but it was open to two fatal objections. Firstly, from tactical reasons, it was most difficult to carry it into effect ; secondly, when it was effected, its almost invariable result was a drawn battle. On this occasion Mathews found it impossible to range his whole line abreast the enemy : 'Lestock would not, or could not, come up ; and the French admiral, De Court, seeing this, held his course to prevent the English closing their line. The English van and centre were thus drawn on after the enemy, and when, at 1.30 P.M., Mathews found them abreast the allied centre and rear, he determined to attack, hoping that his own rear would draw up in time to deal with the French van should it tack into action.

Hawke thus found himself opposite the Spanish *Neptune* in the centre, and after an hour's hard pounding at close quarters, drove her out of the line with heavy loss. He at once turned his attention to the *Poder*, a ship which was fortunate in her captain, and was exceptionally well-manned. She had already beaten off two English ships, and at the time of Hawke's arrival, was exchanging a distant fire with four or five others. The *Berwick* put a stop to such a spectacle by engaging her at half musket shot, and by holding on to her for two hours, when 200 of her crew being killed or wounded and her masts shot away, she struck her flag. Other ships sent boats to take possession, but, so the story goes, her captain, Don Rodriguez Urutia, refused to deliver his sword save to an officer from the *Berwick*, saying that, as for the other ships that had been barking at him, he held them in the greatest contempt. She was in consequence taken possession of by Lloyd, the *Berwick's* first lieutenant, but most unfortunately she had fallen to leeward and, as the fleets stood apart at dusk, she was retaken with an officer and some twenty men in her. The blame for this must be laid on Mathews, who countermanded orders given by Rowley for her preservation, and her recapture is the more to be regretted

as she was the only prize made that day, and—as Professor Burrows points out—to have retained her would have been an answer to the Spanish claim to a victory. On the 12th the French and Spanish fleets were still in sight, and the English followed. The *Poder* delayed them, and they, after a fruitless attempt to burn her, left her. Mathews ordered Richard Norris to set her on fire, and this was done. This was an unhappy move on Mathews's part, for not only was it Hawke's right to see the last of her, but Norris, of many men disgraced in the action of the 11th, had sullied his name the most. With the subsequent courts-martial we have nothing to do here, but with reference to Hawke's hard and complete early training, a quotation from Captain Mahan, will be in place: * "There is not, in modern naval history, a more striking warning to the officers of every era, than this battle of Toulon. Coming as it did after a generation of comparative naval inactivity, it tried men's reputations as by fire. The lesson is the danger of disgraceful failure to men who have neglected to keep themselves prepared, not only in knowledge of their profession, but in the sentiment of what war requires." Hawke was prepared, and he had realised that utter self-devotion which is essential to success.

For eighteen months after the action Hawke was attached to the Mediterranean fleet, but though he was often detached in command of small squadrons, there was nothing to be done. In August, 1745, he was moved by Rowley, then Commander-in-Chief, to the *Neptune*, and sent home on convoy duty. He anchored in the Sound on 20th September, and did not go afloat again as a captain. Though called as a witness on the courts-martial on Mathews and Lestock, he did not attend.

He now had a spell ashore, and, consequent on the death of his uncle, Colonel Bladen, in 1746, moved to Swathling, North Stoneham, which was for many years afterwards his principal residence. It is possible that his stopping ashore at this juncture was in a great measure due to bad health; we know, for instance, that in December, 1745, he was too ill

* 'Influence of Sea Power on History,' p. 257, note.

with a violent cold to attend the Admiralty, and that good officers in 1746 were badly needed. On 30th March, 1747, he was appointed to the *Mars*, then fitting out at Portsmouth, and for the next few months was kept hanging about, both to superintend her outfit, and that he might be handy in case he were needed for service on courts-martial. However, this soon came to an end; there was a promotion of admirals, and Hawke became Rear-Admiral of the White, his commission bearing date 15th July, 1747. It is said that there was an intention to retire him, and there is no reason to doubt the story that it was to the king himself, who had specially noted his conduct off Toulon, that his promotion was due.

The year 1747 marked the turning-point of the war. Before this the successes, such as that of Warren at Louisbourg, had not counterbalanced such fiascoes as that off Toulon, or of Lestock's expedition to Lorient, not to mention the disgraceful conduct of Edward Peyton in the East, and of Cornelius Mitchell in the West Indies. But the Navy was now finding the men she needed. Anson's victory* had already marked 1747 with a white stone, but it was left to Hawke to bring the work to completion.

Sir Samuel Warren was in command of the Channel fleet, and on 3rd August Hawke, with his flag in the *Gloucester*, was appointed to command in the second place. Warren was in very bad health, and though for a while he continued to hold the command, the fleet cruised in reality under the orders of Hawke. At the beginning of September, Warren's illness gained so much upon him that he was compelled to petition to be relieved, and Hawke became the nominal as well as the actual Commander-in-Chief. On 8th September orders were sent to him to cruise between Ushant and Finisterre; there was no real need for this, as Hawke knew well what the enemy was doing, and was already in the Bay of Biscay, waiting for a large convoy, consisting of a strong squadron of men-of-war and some two hundred and fifty merchantmen, which was expected to sail from Rochelle for the West Indies. There were also rumours of Spanish galleons due, but Hawke,

* See above, p. 108.

even though he had not received the orders of 8th September, would not detach any part of his force after unarmed treasure-ships. He preferred to have with him the greatest possible number of ships wherewith to attack the French men-of-war ; sound policy, no doubt, and perhaps obvious, but when we remember the numerous heart-burnings on the subject of prize-money, we cannot but admire the firmness that made such a course possible. In the beginning of October Hawke received his orders, on the 12th he wrote that he was broad off Rochelle, and on the 14th his patience was rewarded.

Hawke, whose flag was now in the *Devonshire*, 66, had with him fourteen ships, whereof two were 70's, two 50's, two 64's, and the rest 60's. The French squadron, under M. de l'Étenduère, consisted of *Le Tonnant*, mounting 80 guns, the flagship, three 74's, one 70, two 64's, a 60, and a 50-gun ship. Thus Hawke had the advantage of numbers, but the French ships individually were superior. At first it was thought that twelve of the enemy's ships were men-of-war, and the signal was made for a line of battle, but as soon as he realized that he had before him a distinctly inferior force, Hawke ordered a general chase. The battle that followed is comparable to that off Cape Passaro in 1718, or to Anson's victory of the previous May ; in all cases the English were in the majority, and a general chase was ordered with the most fortunate results. But there is one difference. The disparity of force on this occasion was far less than in either of the former actions, and we may well believe that many men would have hesitated to neglect the fighting instructions in the presence of an enemy who offered so bold a front as did L'Étenduère. The great merit of Hawke's career as a fighting admiral is, that he looked to the end rather than to the means, that he obeyed what should have been the spirit rather than what was the letter of his instructions. Hence, though he was not the first to aim at fighting a decisive battle, he put the seal of his name on the example of Anson, and taught the English people for the future to expect victory when English and French fleets should meet.

The English ships engaged as they came up, and the

Devonshire herself was always in the thick of the fight. The French ships were well fought, and the action was very obstinate, but in the result six of the nine were taken. The *Content*, of 60 guns, had been ordered to stand by the convoy, and escaped with them; the flagship *Tonnant*, 80, though much disabled, and a 70-gun ship also escaped. The *Tonnant*, among others, had been engaged with Hawke himself, and the admiral was much disappointed at her escape, and blamed Captain Fox of the *Kent* for it, in that, while he could have come to closer action with her as she was making off, he failed to do so. Fox's conduct was the only blemish on the day, and strangely enough, a ship had struck to the *Kent*. Two ships struck to the *Devonshire*, and two others were most severely handled by her; but this is not the whole of what Hawke did. Seeing that he was not in a condition to pursue either the *Tonnant* or the convoy, for the French ships had taken "a deal of drubbing" and the English vessels were much disabled, Hawke at once victualled the *Weazle* sloop, and despatched her to warn the Commander-in-Chief at the West Indies of the approach of the convoy. The result of this prompt action was the capture of a large number of the merchantmen.

In reward for his victory Hawke was made a Knight of the Bath, an honour which does not compare favourably with the peerage granted to Anson for his services in May, and in virtue of the recommendation of the Duke of Bedford, then First Lord of the Admiralty, was returned to Parliament as member for Portsmouth, and held the seat, in the Whig interest, for thirty years. It may be mentioned here that he never spoke in the House, even on subjects of great naval interest such as the Naval Discipline Act of 1749.

The war was now practically at an end, but Hawke, after his return home with the prizes, went again to sea, and cruised under Warren in the Bay of Biscay till the peace. On 12th May, 1748, he was made Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and in July of the following year succeeded Warren in command of the home fleet, a post which he held for four years. During this time he was President or Vice-President of many courts-

martial, and was well remembered both for the ability and fairness he showed, as also for his tact in reconciling the duties of Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth and member for the town. In November, 1752, he struck his flag, but when in 1755 French aggression in America had made war once more inevitable, he hoisted it again on board the *St. George*. On 16th July he was appointed to command a squadron destined to cruise in the Bay and intercept M. Du Guay, who had put into Cadiz. Hawke had the same difficulty in manning this fleet that he had with the *Berwick* in 1743, but his failure to intercept the French fleet was due not to difficulties, but to his instructions, which, by not allowing him to go to the southward of Cape Finisterre, made it possible for M. Du Guay, by making a wide stretch to the westward, to get safely into Brest. In the end of September he returned to Portsmouth with his badly manned ships in a very sickly condition.

During the winter Hawke commanded at Portsmouth, and early in the spring of 1756 was sent to cruise in the Bay in command of one of the squadrons which were kept there when they should have been in the Mediterranean. When Byng had come to grief and had retired to Gibraltar, Hawke, all too late, was sent out to take over the Mediterranean squadron and, if possible, to save Minorca. With him in the *Antelope* went Saunders to replace Temple West, and Lord Tyrawley as Governor of Gibraltar *vice* General Fowke. This little "cargo of courage," as the wits of the day called it, arrived at Gibraltar on 4th July, 1756, too late to be of immediate use. Byng and his officers were sent home, while Hawke hoisted his flag on board the *Ramillies*. The French fleet had retired to Toulon, and as there was now no hostile force afloat, Hawke's mission became largely diplomatic: by judicious showing of the flag he restrained the insults of the petty Italian states, and, notably, on one occasion helped that famous privateer Fortunatus Wright out of an ugly fix in which he found himself at Leghorn. The Austrian authorities, to please the French Government, had arrested him and thrown him into prison. Hawke demanded his release within twenty-four hours, and obtained it. Hawke returned to England in

the winter, leaving Saunders on the station with a few ships. On 24th February, 1757, he was advanced to be Admiral of the Blue, but though it was hoped at the Admiralty that "room would be found there for Hawke" in the administration of June 28th, such were the relations between him and Pitt that no seat on the board was offered him. Relations between Hawke and Pitt never were cordial, and if we are to believe a violent detractor of the statesman who wrote in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1766, there was reason enough for this in the part Hawke took in refuting Pitt's advocacy of Byng. That Pitt should have chosen the man he disliked to command the Rochefort expedition of 1757 is substantial proof of the value popularly assigned then to Hawke's services.

When he came into office in June, 1757, Pitt lost no time in putting into execution a scheme which he had all cut and dried. The question of the land warfare may, for the present purpose, be omitted: Pitt saw his way to win Canada and India, could the French be prevented from interfering. In this non-interference scheme Hawke played a prominent part. The intention was so to occupy the enemy with raids on their coast that they should have scant leisure to send forces over seas. This was the part of the scheme that was the least successful, but Hawke took his share therein with no loss of prestige. Quiberon Bay, it is right to say here, was a pendant to, rather than a part of, the original scheme: it did not help the conquests, but it put reconquest out of the question, and it inscribes the name of Hawke with those of Boscawen and Wolfe on the roll of fame of Canada, and with those of Clive and Watson on that of India.

Directly he came into power Pitt made a start with a secret expedition to Rochefort. The command of the troops was given to Sir John Mordaunt, while Sir Edward Hawke, in command of the ships, was instructed to help him in every way possible. The expedition was well planned enough, and Pitt was not acting without information. The real weakness of the plan lay in the lateness in making a start. At the best the expedition could not have got away before the latter part of August, but, as it was, it was so seriously delayed

by lack of transports in the first instance, and afterwards by calms, that it did not sight the Isle of Rhé till the 20th September. The equinox was coming on, the coast was to all intents uncharted, and such French Protestant pilots as Hawke had with him seem to have been either lamentably ignorant or doubly traitors : such soundings as he had to rely on were taken by the officers of his squadron. At the outset a half-completed fort on the Isle of Aix, commanding the entrance to the Charente, on which Rochefort lies, was battered down, and this was destined to be the only thing done. It was found impracticable to land the troops anywhere but in Chatellaillon Bay, which is much exposed to the westward ; and as the generals refused to take the risk of being landed when heavy weather would at once cut off their retreat, nothing was done. Hawke pointed out that he could land them, and did his utmost to persuade the soldiers to make a move ; but they, reflecting that the water was too shallow for the ships to come within supporting distance, that Rochefort was not to be taken by escalade, and that a gale was more than probable, would not move. Hawke then did all that was left for him to do : he took the troops home. His original instructions had been to get the work done as nearly as possible by the end of September. Nothing had been done, but that was not his fault, and on the 1st October he weighed anchor. It was Hawke's only failure, and though the fault was not his, though his name was not sullied in the angry recriminations that followed, it weighed bitterly upon him.

Meanwhile, a French fleet under M. Dubois de la Mothe was on its homeward way from Louisbourg, where it had been blockaded by Holburne. Holburne's fleet had been wiped out for the time being, by a most disastrous hurricane, and De la Mothe had got out without striking a blow. The approach of this fleet was known in England, and a fortnight after his return from France Hawke put to sea to try to intercept it. Fortunately he missed it. Fortunately, we say, for this fleet was a mere collection of pest-houses. The fate of Hosier's squadron in 1727 is gruesome enough, but it pales beside the record of the state of the ships brought home by

M. de la Mothe, and of the course the fever took when the infection had spread to the shore. The fleet was so weakened that, had Hawke met it, he would have carried the whole of it to Spithead, and in that case the gloomy history of Brest for the winter of 1757-58 would have been told instead of Portsmouth. As soon as he learnt that he had missed it, Hawke returned to Spithead, where he anchored on the 15th December.

The French scheme for 1758 was to effect a junction of their Toulon and Rochefort squadrons and to relieve Louisbourg. Osborn dealt with the Toulon ships, Hawke sailed on 12th March to blockade Rochefort. He had no soldiers with him, so that he was more confident of success; but, on the other hand, he had none of the small craft necessary for operations in shallow waters. Hawke had seven sail of the line and three frigates, and with these on 5th April he surprised the French armament of five ships of the line, half a dozen frigates, and forty transports, which were then lying off the Isle of Aix. The enemy did not wait for him, but ran themselves on to the shoals, where, as Hawke had no bombs, they could not be got at. The boats of Rochefort came out to help, and, by lightening themselves, the French ships got into the Charente. There was nothing to do save to destroy the fortifications that were again rising on Aix, and to see that the guns and stores were not recovered. This was done, and, leaving Keppel to blockade the convoy, Hawke returned to England. The Rochefort squadron was not destroyed, but the main purpose was effected—it did not reach Louisbourg.

Meanwhile a series of descents on the northern coast of France was in preparation, and Hawke was busied in fitting out the fleet. But at the last minute he was told that Howe was to command the secret expedition, and he at once, looking on this as an infringement of his rights, and making sure that Rochefort was again to be attempted, struck his flag in protest. It must be admitted that Sir Edward did not understand the position—indeed, when it was explained to him, he confessed that he had acted hastily. What was intended was that Howe should command an inshore squadron of small

craft with the transports, while Hawke should cruise with a covering squadron of ships of the line. Hawke's striking his flag came as a thunderclap, and it was only by Anson's hoisting his flag as Commander-in-Chief, with the understanding that Sir Edward should serve as his second, that the difficulty was surmounted. But Hawke had no share in the campaign. No sooner had he put to sea than he petitioned, on account of serious ill health, to be released from his command. Leave was granted, and he did not hoist his flag again till the following year. Thus with the operations at Cherbourg, St. Malo, and with the reverse at St. Cas, he had nothing whatever to do.

The next year, 1759, was the glorious and decisive year of the war. Yet it opened with serious apprehensions in England. France, it was known, was about to avenge the insults on her coast: England was to be invaded, and great was the popular dread. The redoubted French monster was many-headed, and needed many men to watch it, but Brest was the most menacing, and therefore, if only to satisfy the populace, to Brest Hawke had to go. The choice of Hawke to command the western squadron was inevitable; there was no one else possible, and the choice pleased all alike. He hoisted his flag on board the *Ramillies* in March, and for six months maintained, under difficulties innumerable, one of the most rigid blockades on record. The history of any blockade is dull, but it is impossible to read of Hawke's squadron off Brest without appreciating the admiral's energy and his unfailing forethought for the well-being of all under his command. He struggled manfully with the difficulty of foul ships, of scant and bad victuals, of heavy gales, and of sickness; and through it all he kept his squadron at the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and in comparatively good health, and ever contrived to have a due number of ships with him. Withal he was admirably served by the light squadrons which were told off to observe the enemy's movements inshore. From time to time he was driven from his station by a heavy westerly gale; but he always had this consolation, that with a west wind the French could not get out. On such occasions he bore up for Plymouth or Torbay, and to Torbay it was that

he had retreated, before a furious November gale, when at length the enemy got out. It had been intended that M. de Conflans should join hands with De la Clue; then they were to pick up the troops in Morbihan, Hawke's fleet meanwhile having been destroyed; after which, what could prevent the invasion? But it never got to that. De la Clue met with Boscawen before he could get round to Brest, and so was out of the story. Nevertheless, the danger was not done with. On the 9th November Hawke was driven from before Brest by a gale which brought some accession of force to Conflans in the person of Bomparr, just returned from the West Indies. On the 14th Hawke at last got away from Torbay, but meanwhile the French had sailed. Hawke knew where to look for them, and on the 20th they were sighted forty miles to the west of Belle Isle.

M. de Conflans was bound for Quiberon Bay, but he had been drawn somewhat from his course in pursuit of Duff's light squadron, which had been blockading the Morbihan. To this was due the action. At the sight of the English fleet of 23 sail, the French ships, 21 in number, strained every nerve to get into Quiberon Bay. It was blowing a gale; there was a heavy sea; and Hawke ordered a general chase. Never has a battle been fought under more dramatic circumstances, in a gale of wind, among the rocks of a lee shore, in the dusk of a short November afternoon.

The Bay of Quiberon is not easy to enter at any time, certainly not in stormy weather. To enter it in a gale in pursuit of an enemy's squadron was a feat of daring, which few commanders have equalled. The daring was justified by the result, which shattered at once the French plan of landing an invading army in Ireland. It was necessary to round the long promontory which shuts off the Bay from the west, passing this point and the islands of Belle Isle and Houat, and then running between those islands and the dangerous reef, the Cardinals and Four. The French fleet, with a pilot of the country, got safely in. Hawke resolved to follow almost into the shoals. His pilot represented the tremendous peril: "You have done your duty," answered Hawke, "in this

remonstrance. You are now to obey my orders, and lay me alongside the French admiral." Part of Hawke's despatch may be here quoted: "All the day we had very fresh gales at N.W. and W.N.W. with heavy squalls. Monsieur Conflans kept going off under such sail as all his squadron could carry, and at the same time keep together; while we crowded after him with every sail our ships could bear. At half-past 2 P.M. the fire beginning ahead, I made the signal for engaging. We were then to the southward of Belle Isle, and the French Admiral headmost, soon after led round the Cardinals, while his rear was in action. About four o'clock the *Formidable* struck, and a little after, the *Thésée* and *Superb* were sunk. About five the *Héros* struck, and came to an anchor, but, it blowing hard, no boat could be sent to board her. Night was now come, and being on a part of the coast of which we were entirely ignorant, without a pilot, as was the greatest part of the squadron, and blowing hard on a lee shore, I made the signal to anchor, and came-to in fifteen fathom water, the island of Dumet bearing E. by N. between two and three miles, the Cardinals W. one-half S., and the steeples of Crozie S.E., as we found next morning. . . . As soon as it was broad daylight in the morning of the 21st, I discovered seven or eight of the enemy's line-of-battle ships at anchor between Point Pensis and the river Vilaine, on which I made the signal to weigh in order to work up and attack them. But it blowed so hard from the N.W. that, instead of daring to cast the squadron loose, I was obliged to strike top-gallant masts. . . . The weather being moderate on the 22nd, I sent the *Portland*, *Chatham*, and *Vengeance* to destroy the *Soleil Royal* and *Héros*. The French, on the approach of our ships, set the first on fire; and soon after, the latter met the same fate from our people." With the loss of two ships, the *Resolution* and the *Essex*, which went to pieces on the shoal Le Four, though both crews were saved, Hawke had practically destroyed the French fleet. Six line-of-battle ships were taken, sunk, or burnt, and of the seven which threw overboard their guns to escape over the bar into the Vilaine, four were wrecked in the process. The remaining eight of the French fleet had escaped



[To face p. 138.]

to Rochefort; but the proposed expedition was now hopeless.*

There was no invasion of England. The battle was the Trafalgar of the war, and it was also decisive to Hawke's career. He returned to England on 17th January, and, though he went to sea again in command of fleets, there could be nothing further for him to do while British seamen grew cabbages on the islands off the Breton coast. He struck his flag for the last time on 3rd September, 1762, a few months before the peace.

After Anson's death civilians for a while filled the post of First Lord of the Admiralty, and it was not till the Chatham administration of 1766 that a naval First Lord was appointed. There were three men possible, Hawke, Pocock, and Saunders, and Chatham chose the last-named, who was the junior. But this was not done out of enmity towards Hawke, whose merit Chatham had long realised; the reason was that Saunders had already served as a junior Lord, and with him Keppel. It was known that Saunders would have retired had any one been appointed over his head, and, moreover, that Keppel would have retired with him. It was undesirable to break up the Board, so Hawke was not appointed. When Saunders and Keppel threw up their posts in November of the same year, Hawke was at once invited to become First Lord, and accepted. He held office for five years, and during that time, a time of peace, used his powers to maintain the Navy at a proper standard, so far as insufficient votes for the purpose would allow. Political detractors he had, but he has come down to us as an able First Lord, and as the originator of the doctrine "that our enemies being particularly attentive to their marine,

* It may be permitted to quote a spirited stanza from Mr. Newbolt's *Admirals All*—

" 'Twas long past noon on a wild November day
 When Hawke came swooping from the west;
 He heard the breakers thundering in Quiberon Bay,
 But he flew the flag for battle, line abreast.
 Down upon the quicksands, waving out of sight,
 Fiercely beat the storm-wind, darkly fell the night;
 But they took the foe for pilot and the cannon's glare for light,
 When Hawke came swooping from the west."

our fleet can only be termed considerable in the proportion it bears to that of the House of Bourbon." It is not the House of Bourbon that we watch now, but many will be surprised to see that a modern catch-word is so old.

Hawke had been made Admiral of the White in October, 1762, Rear-Admiral of Great Britain in the following December, Vice-Admiral of Great Britain three years later, and in January, 1768, Admiral and Commander-in-Chief. His peerage was still delayed. He should have received it, if not after the victory of Quiberon, at least at the peace. Failing that, it might have been granted when in 1771 he laid down the office of First Lord which he had held under two administrations; but in the event the long-deserved reward was not conferred upon him till 20th May, 1776. He chose to be styled Baron Hawke of Towton, after one of the estates brought him by his long-dead wife, by whose side he was laid to rest five years later in the churchyard of North Stoneham.



E. Boscawen.

SIR EDWARD BOSCAWEN, K.C.B., ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE.

VIII.

SIR EDWARD BOSCAWEN, K.C.B., ADMIRAL OF THE BLUE.

BY PERCY CROSS STANDING.

EDWARD BOSCAWEN stands easily third amongst the great sea-captains of his time. The only possible rivals of his period were Anson and Hawke; and if Boscawen did not encompass the maritime world as Anson did, or destroy a French fleet in quite the complete manner that Hawke did, it was only opportunity that he lacked. As it was, his uniformly brilliant career upon the sea depended not so much for its lustre upon one fine feat of arms as upon many, and the elder Pitt marked his appreciation of Boscawen's invaluable services by appointing him successively to high commands which had lately been held by the two great admirals named above.

Although it cannot with justice be said that high family connections stood him in good stead—for every step that he mounted in the ladder of fame was won by dint of sheer hard work—Boscawen came of one of the oldest and most illustrious families in England. He hailed from the West of Britain—from the storm-blown quarter that had, still earlier in our naval annals, given us a Drake, a Blake, a Frobisher, a Hawkins. He belonged, in fact, to the Boscawen-Roses of Cornwall, who had held their lands in fee ever since the time of King John onwards. The Boscawens of Tregothnan often played an important part in their country's, as in their county's, history during the stormy centuries that followed the signing of Magna Charta, until in the seventeenth century we find "Edward Boscawen, Esq.," figuring as a Member of

the Restoration Parliament. The family were ennobled in 1720, by the style of "Barons of Boscawen-Rose and Viscounts Falmouth."* The subject of this sketch was the second son of the first Viscount Falmouth, whose wife was a niece of the hero of Blenheim and Ramillies. It may be said at once that Edward Boscawen had every inducement for the adoption of a martial career—for, apart from the warlike strain in his immediate ancestry, two of his brothers eventually attained the rank of Generals in the King's army, while one of his sisters became the wife of an admiral (John Leveson-Gower).

Boscawen's active career as a sailor did not open under the happiest of auspices. His first service of any importance took place during Admiral Sir Edward Vernon's expedition to the Spanish Main—that enterprise which, opening so brilliantly as it did, was destined to so tame and unsatisfactory an ending.† Boscawen's first independent command was a 20-gun frigate called the *Shoreham*; but when the time arrived for Vernon's assault upon Porto Bello (21st November, 1739) the young commander's vessel was not in a fit condition to take the sea, so he, thirsting for distinction, asked and obtained Vernon's permission to accompany the expedition in the capacity of a simple volunteer. This, as it happened, gave the gallant Boscawen the very opportunity for which he was so eager.

At the outset of Vernon and Wentworth's hopelessly ill-managed attack upon Cartagena, it happened that a Spanish fascine battery on the Baradera side of the city was enabled to inflict great annoyance and considerable loss upon the British as they landed. In order to put a stop to this, a night attack upon the offending battery was arranged for,

* The present representative of this distinguished family is Viscount Falmouth, C.B., formerly Assistant-Military Secretary to the General Commanding in Ireland. Lord Falmouth served with distinction in the Egyptian War of 1882, including the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, for which he received the medal with clasp, Osmanieh and Khedive star; he also commanded the Guards Camel Corps in the Nile Expedition of 1884-85, was present at the battles of Abu-Klea and Abu-Kru, and commanded the British forces at Metemmeh, for which he was awarded two clasps.

† See pp. 84-95.

and was carried into effect by the boats of the fleet on the 19th March, 1741. A landing-party of 500 soldiers and sailors was placed under command of Boscawen, with whom went Captains William Laws and Thos. Cotes. Stealthily landing in the tropic darkness, about one mile to the leeward side of the battery, Boscawen's heroic band found their progress barred by a masked battery of five guns which had been placed on the very beach itself in anticipation of some such attempt! In no wise daunted by the double task now set them, the storming-party rushed forward with a cheer for King George. Speedily the five guns changed hands, the Spanish gunners fleeing for their lives—and then, pushing rapidly on to the main battery, the stormers carried that also in most brilliant fashion, “spiked the guns, and set the carriages, fascines, platforms, magazines, and guard-houses, on fire.” *

Boscawen's next command was the 50-gun ship *Dreadnought*. It was while in command of her that he fought and won the splendid naval duel which earned for him the *sobriquet* of “Old Dreadnought.” After the return of the expedition from the Spanish Main he was attached to the fleet of Admiral Sir Charles Hardy; and while this squadron was cruising off the coast of Portugal Boscawen's vessel had the good luck to fall in with the French warship *Médée*. In the desperate yardarm-to-yardarm action that followed, the *Dreadnought* came off victorious and captured her adversary, Boscawen's personal example winning from his sailors the nickname that stuck to him through life. It should be mentioned that the *Dreadnought* was accompanied by the 14-gun ship *Grampus*, though it does not appear that the latter took any effective part in the action.

This victory was gained on the 27th April, 1744. It was particularly popular at home, chiefly because, in various single-ship actions fought that year, we lost the *Seaford*, *Solebay*, *Grampus*, and *Northumberland*, besides losing the *Victory*, of 100 guns, in a storm.

Preparatory to Boscawen's being promoted to flag rank,

* See p. 90.

we find him next under command of Anson, and bearing a very handsome share in that hero's victory over the French fleet of Admiral de la Jonquière.* It was in the nature of a running fight, for Jonquière, though behaving gallantly enough himself, received grossly inadequate support from his subordinates. We captured three of the Frenchman's men-of-war as well as six sail of his convoy, together with treasure estimated at £300,000. Anson was very properly rewarded with a peerage.

Boscawen had the honour of being wounded in the shoulder, in this engagement. "Old Dreadnought" was always receiving plenty of hard knocks, and he seemed to revel in them. His ship on this occasion was the *Namur*, a 74, which assisted in the capture of at least one of the Frenchmen. His wound, and the tactical skill uniformly displayed by him, now procured for Boscawen a very important command indeed. This was nothing less than the control of a formidably equipped expedition whose immediate objective was to be the French East Indies with special reference to the reduction of Pondicherry. The Command-in-Chief in the East Indies was, in fact, given to "Rear-Admiral the Hon. Edward Boscawen,"—a step in rank which his splendid record of services most justly entitled him to. His opponent in the East was none other than the celebrated Dupleix—that dreaming schemer whose incessant vision was a huge French Empire in Asia. On the Eastern station Boscawen arrived to supersede Rear-Admiral Griffin, who came home. He found himself in command of a particularly fine fleet, including the *Namur* (flag), *Vigilant*, *Deptford*, *Pembroke*, *Ruby*, *Deal Castle*, *Chester*, *Swallow*, *Basilisk*, *Exeter*, *York*, *Harwich*, *Preston*, *Lively*, and *Apollo*. He was also in a position to dispose of over 5000 troops for service on shore, in addition to 2000 native cavalry who were to be utilised for the siege of Pondicherry.

That the attempt upon that place did not succeed is no reflection whatever upon Boscawen or his strategy, and it is pleasing to be able to record that the home Government recognised this and cast no reproach upon him. In August

* See pp. 108-110.

(1748) the Admiral went ashore near Pondicherry to direct in person the siege operations, leaving Captain Lisle of the *Vigilant* to blockade the place from seaward with the ships of the squadron. On the 12th August an assault upon the outworks failed, and it speedily became evident to Boscawen that his engineers were grossly incompetent. He next ordered a general bombardment by the ships; but here the difficulties of shoal-water became apparent, and the attempt to obey the order cost at least one valuable life, in Captain Adams of the *Harwich*. Early in October Boscawen decided to raise the siege and retire to Fort St. David, especially as there was much sickness among the troops and the rains were coming on apace. Accordingly the retirement was carried out, the British having, in the course of the siege, lost 1065 killed, while the loss of the French was very much smaller.* Meanwhile the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had been signed, so that all hostile operations were perforce at an end. But ill-luck was destined to pursue Boscawen from end to end of this enterprise. He detached two of his finest vessels, the *Namur* and *Pembroke*, to assist the East India Company in a little war which they were waging against the King of Tanjore: these were both lost, with nearly all hands, in one of the frightful hurricanes peculiar to the Eastern seas. In the *Pembroke* were lost 330 officers and men, in the *Namur* 520, or little short of a thousand souls in all. Well might Boscawen weep bitter tears for the loss of so many hundreds of his gallant fellows! Providentially enough, he himself was on shore at the time, with the captain and some of his officers.

As he had now served in the East, Boscawen was next to be fitted with a Western command. For, as the great Chatham pithily expressed it, "When I ask other officers to do a thing, they raise difficulties. Boscawen suggests remedies."

He was now Vice-Admiral. On April 27th, 1755 (war being again threatened, though not actually declared), Boscawen hoisted his flag in the *Torbay*, and sailed from

* It is an interesting fact that the celebrated Clive, afterwards the hero of Plassy, saw his first active service in these operations.

Plymouth for North America, having under him eleven sail-of-the-line, two frigates, and one sloop. Meanwhile, however, a French expedition of twenty-five sail had left Brest, bound for the same destination, under command of Admiral de la Motte. As soon as this fact became known in England, Rear-Admiral Holburne was hastily sent after Boscawen with a reinforcement of six sail and a frigate. The two forces "joined hands" on June 21st, off the Newfoundland coast.

But before Holburne could arrive, Boscawen had fought a highly successful action with four of De la Motte's line-of-battle ships which had become separated from his main fleet. The honours of this engagement, which resulted in the capture of two French men-of-war, the *Alcide* and the *Lys*, were carried off, on the English side, by the *Torbay*, Boscawen's flagship, the *Dunkirk*, and the *Defiance*. The other Frenchmen, we are told, "got away owing to the return of the fog." The main French fleet got safely into Quebec. After leaving Holburne with a few ships to blockade Louisbourg, the Admiral made sail for England, but did not enter port until the terrible epidemic of putrid fever had carried off *two thousand* of his ships' companies! The French people and Government were very much incensed at the capture of two of their ships when war had not actually been declared. But Boscawen had merely carried out his orders, and the actual declaration of hostilities was not long delayed, coming into effect on May 18, 1756. The following brief account of the action occurs in Campbell's 'Lives of the Admirals':—

"But the thick fog so frequent on that coast favoured their [the enemy's] enterprise, and Monsieur de la Motte arrived at Quebec with his whole squadron, except the *Alcide* and the *Lys*, the first of 64 guns and 480 men; the second of 22 though pierced for 64, with eight companies of land forces on board. These two unfortunate ships fell in with the *Dunkirk*, Captain Howe, and the *Defiance*, Captain Andrews, both 60-gun ships. After a resolute engagement of five hours the French ships struck. On board the *Lys* were several officers of distinction and about £80,000 sterling. From the

capture of these two ships the commencement of the war may properly be dated. As soon as it was known in Europe, the French Ambassador left London, and the British Ministry issued general orders for making reprisals in every part of the globe. In consequence of this resolution, three hundred French merchantmen were taken and brought into England before the expiration of this year."

We now come to the most celebrated of all Boscowen's exploits—to wit, his reduction of the fortress of Louisbourg and the resultant acquisition of a great part of North America by the British arms. For the carrying on of the war on sea and land in 1758, the British Government voted 45,000 sailors, 15,000 marines, and 54,000 soldiers. For the purposes of comparison, it may be of interest to state that at this time we had at disposal 320 ships of war (whereof 156 were sail-of-the-line), as against France's 77 sail-of-the-line and 39 frigates, and Spain's 52 sail and 26 frigates. But these things did not trouble Boscowen, who weighed anchor at St. Helen's on the 19th February, 1758, and bore away for America. He was in command of a superb fleet of 41 ships of war and 18 frigates. His own flag was hoisted in the *Namur*, of 90 guns, and under his orders went Admirals Sir Charles Hardy and Durell. The fleet made Halifax, Nova Scotia, on May 9, whence they sailed for Louisbourg later in the month, having in tow a huge convoy with 14,000 troops on board, commanded by Major-General Amherst. It is interesting to recall that under Boscowen on this enterprise served George Brydges Rodney, while with Amherst went James Wolfe, destined to deathless fame as the hero of Quebec.

The Governor of Louisbourg, Chevalier Drucour, "had taken every possible precaution to prevent surprise." The formidable fortress was powerfully garrisoned, and there were several warships in the harbour; but the attack which the British delivered on June 8 was so well conceived and executed that there was no resisting it. Its success owed much to the personal example of the brave Wolfe, who, sword in hand, leapt from the leading boat into the raging surf, and formed the troops on the beach under a terrific fire. In this

operation no fewer than seventy boats were lost by being swamped, and with them many of Boscawen's and Amherst's gallant men. But the end justified the means. The French abandoned their first line of defence and fled, leaving behind them seventeen guns, "fourteen large swivels, two mortars, a furnace for red-hot balls, small-arms, ammunition, stores, tools, and provisions in considerable quantity."

It was now that the Admiral displayed a positive genius which united in his person the functions of naval and of military commander—a genius of which we have already seen fitful gleams in the unsuccessful siege of Pondicherry. After Wolfe had, by a very admirable stroke of strategy, seized "Lighthouse Point" and so commanded the place from two sides instead of one, events moved more swiftly. On the 21st July an English shell was the means of destroying by fire three of the enemy's ships in the harbour, leaving only two, the *Prudent* and *Bienfaisant*, to annoy the besiegers. Boscawen at once decided that these two vessels should be cut out, and he detailed Captains Laforey and Balfour for the deadly work. "By the Admiral's orders," says Dr. Campbell, "a barge and pinnace from every ship in the fleet assembled, about noon, under the stern of the *Namur*. These boats were manned only by their proper crews, armed chiefly with pistols and cutlasses, and each boat commanded by a lieutenant and midshipman. From thence they proceeded, by two or three at a time, to join Sir Charles Hardy's squadron near the mouth of the harbour. Being there reassembled in two divisions, under the two captains above mentioned, about midnight they paddled into the harbour of Louisbourg unperceived. The night was extremely dark and the seamen were profoundly silent. They passed very near the island battery undiscovered, the darkness of the night and a thick fog prevented their being seen, whilst the perpetual din of bombs, cannon, and musketry, both of the besieged and besiegers, effectually covered the noise of their oars. As soon as each division came near enough to perceive the devoted object, the two men-of-war were immediately surrounded by the boats, and were first alarmed by the firing

of their own sentinels. All the boats fell aboard at the same instant, and the several crews, following the example of their officers, scrambled up every part of the ships, and in a few minutes took possession of their respective prizes. The resistance was very feeble, and consequently the loss of men on either side inconsiderable."

This disaster sufficed to persuade the Chevalier Drucour that further resistance was perfectly hopeless. After trying hard for favourable terms of surrender—which, of course, Boscawen resolutely declined to grant—the Frenchman "yielded to irresistible necessity." By this capitulation the islands of Cape Breton and St. John became the property of the British Crown, and the French power in the Western hemisphere was shattered. Boscawen and Amherst both received the thanks of Parliament.

On his way home from America (October, 1758) the victorious Admiral fell in with the fleet of Admiral du Chaffault, also *en voyage* back from Quebec. Now it chanced that when the enemy hove in sight Boscawen had with him only the *Namur*, 90 (flag); the *Royal William*, 84; *Bienfaisant*, 64; *Somerset*, 64; *Trent*, 28; *Echo*, 28; *Boreas*, 28; and a brace of fire-ships. Chaffault had the *Tonnant*, 80; *Intrépide*, 74; *Héros*, 74; *Protée*, 64; *Bellicieux*, 64; a frigate, and a captured Indiaman called the *Carnarvon*. "The enemy, being on the contrary tack, passed the British squadron very near, to leeward; and in passing discharged her broadsides. Some of the British ships returned the fire; but, the wind blowing hard, most of the vessels could not open their lower ports; and thus, in this partial action, very little damage was done. Boscawen, in spite of the superiority of the French, changed his course and stood after them. The night was very stormy, but on the following morning the enemy was again discovered." Du Chaffault had little stomach for the fight, though, and we took but one prize.

Boscawen's next and last opponent was Admiral de la Clue, who lay inside Toulon with a formidable fleet. Out of Toulon De la Clue could not be persuaded to come, so Boscawen closely blockaded him there with a squadron of

fourteen sail-of-the-line, frigates, and fire-ships. "The honour of the British flag was effectually maintained," says the historian, "by the gallant Admiral Boscawen, who commanded in the Mediterranean." The following line-of-battle ships were in Boscawen's squadron on this momentous occasion :—

<i>Namur</i> , 90, Admiral Boscawen.	<i>St. Albans</i> , 64, Captain Vernon.
<i>Prince</i> , 90, Vice-Admiral Broderick.	<i>Intrepid</i> , 60, „ Pratten.
<i>Newark</i> , 80, Captain Peyton.	<i>America</i> , 60, „ Kirke.
<i>Warspite</i> , 74, „ Bentley.	<i>Princess Louisa</i> , 60, Captain Harland.
<i>Culloden</i> , 74, „ Callis.	<i>Jersey</i> , 60, Captain Barker.
<i>Conqueror</i> , 70, „ Lloyd.	<i>Guernsey</i> , 50, „ Kearny.
<i>Swiftsure</i> , 70, „ Stanhope.	<i>Portland</i> , 50, „ Maplesden.
<i>Edgar</i> , 64, „ Drake.	

The Admiral, having "in vain displayed the British flag in sight of Toulon," hit upon the expedient of sending three ships into the harbour with orders to destroy two of the enemy who were moored temptingly near the fairway. Albeit this attempt failed and the three ships got severely mauled by the shore batteries, it served Boscawen's purpose, inasmuch as, on his withdrawing to Gibraltar to refit, De la Clue seized the opportunity to slip out of Toulon. But Boscawen had cunningly held the Frenchman in observation with two of his frigates; and so soon as he heard De la Clue had come out, he made all sail after him. As luck would have it, seven sail of the enemy—including his flagship, the *Océan*—became separated from their consorts in the night. Coming up with them off the Bay of Lagos, Boscawen's flagship engaged the *Océan* furiously. "This dispute, however, was not of long continuance; for the French Admiral being wounded in the engagement, and the next in command perceiving that Boscawen's vessel had lost her mizzen mast and topsail yards, went off with all the sail he could carry. Mr. Boscawen shifted his flag from the *Namur* to the *Newark*, and joined some other ships in attacking the *Centaur*, which was obliged to strike. The pursuit continued all night." In capturing and destroying several of the enemy in this most brilliant fashion, Boscawen's own casualties did not exceed 250 killed and wounded, and he lost not a single officer. It was afterwards claimed that he had violated Portuguese

territory ; for when two or three of De la Clue's captains ran their ships ashore near Lagos, he pursued them and either captured or burnt them there. But in such circumstances it would have been useless to talk to a Boscawen about "violating neutral territory."

The Admiral's own comment on this victory was that "it was well, but might have been a great deal better." The historian Beatson writes : "The British as well as the French Admiral was not quite well pleased with the behaviour of his captains, some of whom, he thought, did not make sail enough to get up with the van of the enemy's fleet which the Admiral wished they should attack, in order to retard their flight until the rest of the squadron should be able to join in the action. Others, through mismanagement he thought, had allowed their ships to fall to leeward after they had engaged the enemy some time, and therefore could not properly get into action again. But great allowance ought to be made for this, for just as the British ships came up with the enemy's rear the wind died away. They attacked the enemy on the lee side, in order that they might be able to open their lower ports, some of the ships carrying them very low. Another reason why some of the British ships fell so much to leeward was that the French Admiral, on perceiving Boscawen in the *Namur*, and some ships along with him, pressing forward to attack his van and centre, made his fleet luff up as much as they possibly could, so as to form a sort of crescent." In other words, the whole of the British fleet did not succeed in getting into touch with the enemy.

Although he subsequently commanded the Mediterranean fleet on a short and uneventful cruise *vice* Sir Edward Hawke, his victory over De la Clue was practically Boscawen's last sea service. Nor did he survive his retirement from active service for many months, dying in 1761, an Admiral of the Blue and a Lord of the Admiralty.

Edward Boscawen was essentially a *fighting* Admiral. We have already quoted Chatham's well-deserved eulogy to this effect ; and in summing up Boscawen's services to the State, we must remember that the intrigues inseparable from the

careers of so many of the "sea-dogs" of his generation, would have been utterly foreign to his fine nature. The unfortunate Byng might get executed for a failure; Vernon might seek to shift the responsibility for *his* failure by engaging in a rancorous quarrel with the commander of the land forces; or Keppel might brave the terrors of a court-martial for the sake of a "principle." But with Boscawen it was otherwise, and his sailors loved him even as his enemies feared him. All that he did, was done for his country, and for it alone. In a word, of him in particular Mr. Newbolt's stirring lines might well have been written—

"The Sea Kings loved not boasting, they cursed not him that cursed;
They honoured all men duly, and him that faced them first.
They strove and knew not hatred, they smote and toiled to save,
They tended whom they vanquished, they praised the fallen brave.
Their fame's on Torres Vedras, their fame's on Vigo Bar,
Far flash'd from Cape St. Vincent, it burns to Trafalgar.
Mark as ye go the beacons that woke the world with light,
When down their ancient highway your fathers passed to fight!"



G B Rodney

ADMIRAL SIR GEORGE BRYDGES RODNEY. LORD RODNEY.

*The Portrait is from Dupont's Engraving of the Picture by Gainsborough.
The Autograph is a facsimile of that in Rodney's Despatch to the Admiralty of April 14,
1782, announcing his victory of April 12th.*

IX.

ADMIRAL SIR GEORGE BRYDGES RODNEY, LORD RODNEY.

BY WILLIAM GREY.

GEORGE BRYDGES RODNEY was born at the close of 1718 or very early in the following year. The actual day of his birth has never been exactly established, but he was baptized at St. Giles-in-the-Fields on the 13th February, 1719.*

His family traced their descent through a line of not undistinguished ancestors to one Walter de Rodeney who—in return, it is said, for his services on behalf of the Empress Matilda during the civil wars of Stephen's reign—received from her son a large grant of land in Somerset. This property (or, at all events, the portion of it known by the name of Stoke-Rodeney) remained in the possession of Walter de Rodeney's male descendants until the middle of the seventeenth century. In the early part of James I.'s reign it was held by Sir John Rodeney (the Admiral's great-great-grandfather) who married Jane Seymour, a niece of Henry VIII.'s queen and of Somerset the Protector. It passed eventually to Sir John's granddaughter, Lady Brydges of Kainsham, and through her to the Dukes of Chandos. The Admiral's father, Henry Rodney (great-grandson of Sir John), was a captain in Holt's regiment of marines until the regiment was disbanded in 1713 after the Treaty of Utrecht. He then left the Service and about the same time married a daughter of Sir Henry Newton, the British representative at the Court

* As the date of his baptism has been variously given by his biographers as February, 1718, and February, 1719, it may be as well to say that an examination of the parish register of St. Giles-in-the-Fields proves it to have been February 13th, 1719.

of Tuscany. He and his wife both died in 1737. George Brydges Rodney was their second son.

Rodney entered the Navy in June, 1732, when he was thirteen years old, as a "King's letter-boy" or "Volunteer per order." This system of admission to the Service was then about to be abolished and Rodney was, in fact, the last who entered the Navy by its means. A boy who was fortunate enough to obtain a King's "Letter of Service"—only a certain number of which were granted every year—was generally appointed to a ship at the direct instance of the Admiralty without having to wait for the good will of a particular captain, and he also was supposed to stand a speedier chance of being "made" lieutenant than those who entered the Service in the ordinary way. When Rodney obtained his lieutenant's commission he had seen seven years of service. The first ship which he joined (at Sheerness in July, 1732) was the *Sunderland*, from which he was subsequently moved into the *Dreadnought*. In the summer of 1739 he was on board Admiral Nicholas Haddock's flagship, the *Somerset*, in the Mediterranean, and in October of that year, just about the time that the news of the war with Spain reached the Mediterranean fleet, he was promoted to be lieutenant of the *Dolphin* frigate, then commanded by his uncle Lord Aubrey Beauclerk. In November, 1742, he obtained post-rank, being appointed by Admiral Matthews (on whose flagship in the Mediterranean, the *Namur*, he was serving at the time) to be captain of the *Plymouth* of 60 guns. In the *Plymouth* he almost immediately returned home with a large convoy of merchant vessels engaged in the Lisbon trade. He reached England, just as the country was finally entering into the War of the Austrian Succession, at the opening of 1743, and on his arrival his commission as captain was confirmed. He had reached that rank, "not so rapidly as some of his contemporaries but still speedily." After ten and a half years' service, and having just turned twenty-four years of age, he now "stood on his own quarter-deck with the best of prospects that he might one day command a fleet."*

* Hannay's 'Rodney,' p. 15.

From September, 1743, Rodney was in command of the *Sheerness* until October, 1744, when he was transferred to a larger frigate, the *Ludlow Castle*, which formed one of the squadron under Vernon* cruising in the North Sea during "the '45;" and at the close of 1745 he was appointed to a new 60-gun ship the *Eagle*. In April, 1747, a small squadron which included the *Eagle* was despatched under the command of Captain Fox in the *Kent* to intercept a fleet of over a hundred French merchant-ships which were then being convoyed home from San Domingo by three sail of the French line commanded by M. De la Mothe. Fox fell in with the object of his search off Cape Ortegal on the 20th June: De la Mothe, with his inadequate force, abandoned his convoy; and no less than forty-five of the French merchantmen—representing an immensely valuable cargo—were captured and brought into port. Rodney and the rest of Fox's squadron had scarcely returned when the *Eagle* and *Kent* were ordered to join the squadron then forming at Plymouth for the purpose of intercepting the French commander, De l'Etenduère, who with nine of the largest sail in the French line was about to start from Rochelle for the West Indies with a convoy of 250 merchant-ships. The English squadron under Hawke,† which numbered fourteen, sailed on the 8th September, and for a month were kept cruising between Ushant and Finisterre as De l'Etenduère did not finally sail from Rochelle till October 8th. On October 14th Hawke sighted them off Cape Finisterre, and the brilliant action ensued which covered both the French and the English commanders with equal honour. It was in this finely fought engagement that Rodney won his first laurels. Early in the action the *Eagle* was exposed to a double fire from two of the enemy's ships, both of them carrying more than her number of guns, and was for a time completely crippled. The English ships suffered severely, but after a determined resistance six of the French ships were taken by Hawke, and with his squadron and their prizes he returned to Portsmouth on October the 31st.

* See above, p. 96.

† See pp. 130, 131.

Rodney's "admirable behaviour" * in the fight off Finisterre may be said to have marked him out for future service. When he arrived in London Anson presented him to the king † with the words, "I wish your Majesty had one hundred more such captains to the terror of your Majesty's enemies." For the next four years (from 1748 to 1752) Rodney, in command of the *Rainbow* and with the somewhat misleading title of "Governor of Newfoundland," was employed as Commander-in-Chief over the resident officers in charge of the Newfoundland fisheries. "The post was a good one," and the yearly duty which it involved of convoying the ships laden with stock-fish to the Mediterranean and thence home gave him an experience which must have stood him in good stead when thirty years later "he sailed to relieve Gibraltar." ‡

In 1752, after returning as usual in the late autumn to England, he resigned his Newfoundland command and paid off the *Rainbow*, and for the next five years he remained at home. In 1751 he had succeeded to an estate at Alresford on the death of his friend and kinsman, George Brydges, who had been the guardian of his early youth. § In the same year he had been elected to the House of Commons as one of the Members for the borough of Saltash. Rodney's parliamentary record may be very briefly summarised—it is too colourless in character to be called in any sense a political career. Naval officers were commonly chosen as "nominees for dockyard seats or for the pocket-boroughs in the west." || The system was convenient to Ministers and equally advantageous for naval officers, who (to quote Rodney's own expression ¶) were "nothing without being in Parliament." For the rest, Rodney's political creed seems to have been limited to a great feeling of personal duty to the king as "captain" of the State and a general desire "to keep foreigners from fooling us." ** He sat in Parliament for Saltash (the pocket-

* Burrows's 'Hawke' (1st edit.), p. 178.

† Mundy's 'Life of Rodney,' i. 43.

‡ Hannay's 'Rodney,' p. 29.

§ Collins's Peerage (ed. Sir Egerton Brydges), vi. 719 and vii. 562.

|| Hannay's 'Rodney,' p. 53.

¶ Mundy, i. 298.

** *Edinburgh Review*, clxxv. 186.

borough of Cleveland, Secretary to the Admiralty) from 1751 until the Dissolution of 1754. From November, 1759, until the Dissolution of 1761, and through the Parliament of 1761-68 he sat as Newcastle's nominee for the boroughs of Oakhampton and Penryn respectively. Newcastle's death, however, and the change in the position of parties caused by George III.'s personal participation in politics threw him on his own resources, and in 1768 he successfully contested the borough of Northampton as one of the "King's Friends" and largely at his own expense—an election which was notorious for its corruption even in a notoriously corrupt general contest, and which is said to have cost Rodney personally a matter of £15,000.* He represented Northampton until the Dissolution of 1774. In October, 1780, he was elected in conjunction with C. J. Fox (and during his own absence abroad) for the City of Westminster. This seat he retained until he was "called up to the Upper House" in 1782.

In February, 1753, very shortly after giving up his Newfoundland command, Rodney married (as his first wife) Jane Compton, a sister of the eighth Lord Northampton, with whom he was afterwards very closely concerned in the election contest of 1768; and in 1754 he settled in a house (now numbered 28) in Hill Street, where he had the ill-fated Admiral Byng as a near neighbour.† For the greater part of each year from 1753 to 1757, however, he was either at Portsmouth or Plymouth in command of a guardship. In January, 1757, he lost his wife. In the following month he was transferred from the *Monarch*, in which (as guardship) he was then stationed at Plymouth, to the *Dublin* of 74 guns, and in the latter he once more prepared for sea. In one momentous respect this transference was a timely one for him—it saved him the terrible duty of assisting at the execution of Byng, which was carried out on the quarter-deck of the *Monarch* a few weeks after Rodney had exchanged her for his new ship.

* Cf. May, 'Constitutional Hist.,' i. 339.

† From information supplied by Mr. Arthur Dament, author of the 'History of St. James's Square.'

In the *Dublin* Rodney took part in Hawke's abortive expedition to Rochefort in the autumn of 1757. The expedition is obviously more closely connected with Hawke's career * than with that of Rodney. Respecting the latter's share in it, all that need be noted is that—as a combined result of his rank in Hawke's squadron and of the Secret Instructions given to Hawke by Pitt—Rodney was one of those who took part in the memorable council of war held before Rochefort on September 25th by the four senior naval and the four principal military commanders engaged in the expedition, and that, in common with Hawke and the two other naval members of the council, he assented to the reasons advanced by General Mordaunt and the other military members for refusing to risk an attack on the place.† For the rest of that year (1757) Rodney was cruising under Hawke, and finally returned to Spithead on December 15th. Early in 1758 the *Dublin* was hastily despatched to carry out General Amherst and his staff, and to take the place of a disabled ship in Boscawen's expedition to reduce Louisbourg; but after joining the Admiral in May, Rodney was compelled by the sickly state of the *Dublin* to put into Halifax whilst the rest of the fleet proceeded to Louisbourg, and shortly afterwards he returned home.

In May, 1759, when he was exactly forty years of age, Rodney obtained his flag as Rear-Admiral of the Blue, and was then sent in command of a light squadron, which included six bomb-ketches, to bombard Havre and destroy the stores and the fleet of flat-bottomed boats which the French were collecting there with a project of invading England. He anchored in the road of Havre on the 3rd July. By the following morning his bombs were so placed that "every shell they threw fell either among the flat-bottomed boats or into the town," and two days later he writes—

"Our bomb-vessels have continued to bombard for fifty-two hours without intermission, with such success that the town was several times in flames and their magazines of stores burned with very great fury for upwards of six hours."

* See pp. 133-137.

† Hawke's Despatch of the 29th September, 1757.

For the rest of 1759, and until the spring of 1761, Rodney was for the most part employed in cruising off Havre and keeping a very necessary watch and ward along the French coast.

Towards the end of 1761, when five years of the Seven Years' War had passed, it was decided to prosecute a more active and offensive policy in the West Indies; and it is evident that Rodney's reputation was by then fairly established, since he was appointed for the purpose to the command of the Leeward Islands station. Hoisting his flag in the *Marlborough*, he sailed in October, 1761, arrived at Barbadoes and took over his new command on the 22nd November, and before Christmas he was joined by General Monckton with troops (drawn mainly from the army that had been engaged in the conquest of Canada) amounting in all to over 13,000 men. With this military force and a fleet of sixteen sail of the line Rodney appeared off the island of Martinique on the 7th January, 1762, and nine days later, after considerable difficulty, he succeeded in landing all the troops at Cas Navire Bay, five miles from the citadel of Fort Royal. The obstacles which now confronted Monckton's men were almost insurmountable. Between Cas Navire and the citadel, which lay full in view, was a rough mountainous country, the whole of it a natural fortification, along which the French had posted guards and erected batteries at every possible point. It was not till the 24th January that the troops were able to get their batteries into a position from which they could bombard the citadel. The feat of dragging the guns to the front was mainly achieved by the energy of a thousand men of the fleet "who made no difficulties in transporting numbers of the heaviest mortars and ships' cannon up the steepest mountains . . . across the enemy's line of fire." *

"The service they did us," wrote one of Monckton's officers, "is incredible. To see them in action exceeds any idea that can be formed of them. A hundred or two of them, with ropes and pullies, will do more than all your dray-horses in London. . . . It is droll enough to see them

* Rodney's Despatch of the 10th February, 1762.

tugging along with a good twenty-four pounder at their heels : on they go huzzaing and hallooing, sometimes up hill, sometimes down hill ; now sticking fast in the brakes, presently foundering in the mud and mire ; swearing, blasting, damning, sinking, and as careless of everything but the matter committed to their charge as if death or danger had nothing to do with them."

The citadel of Fort Royal finally surrendered on the 4th of February, and by the 16th the whole of Martinique was in British hands. The surrender of the islands of Grenada and St. Lucia followed almost immediately. Thus—although both Martinique and St. Lucia were subsequently restored to her by the Treaty of Paris—the only possession that France for the moment retained in the West Indies was San Domingo.

Early in March Rodney received intelligence of the outbreak of war with Spain, and the news was followed by orders from England for him to suspend all further proceedings pending the arrival of Admiral Pocock in command of a secret expedition to which everything was to give way.* Despatching ten sail of the line to protect Jamaica which was apprehensive of an attack from a combined French and Spanish force, Rodney himself awaited the arrival of the new Commander-in-Chief. Pocock eventually arrived at Martinique on the 26th April, and, ten days later, sailed for Havana, taking with him two-thirds of Rodney's fleet, including his flagship. Rodney himself with a diminished force was left in charge of the Leeward Islands. To be thus superseded must have been—and, as we now know, was †—a bitter disappointment, all the more so as Rodney knew that a command of such importance and value as that of the Havana expedition of 1762 did not often fall to an officer of his standing at the time. And the disappointment was still further intensified for him, as a poor man, by the fact that his successor as Commander-in-Chief subsequently reaped, in the taking of Havana, a sum of prize-money amounting to £122,000.†

* Beatson, ii. 532.

† Mundy, i. 106.

‡ 'Life of Keppel,' i. 364.

In October, 1762, Rodney became Vice-Admiral of the Blue and on relinquishing his command he returned home. In 1764 he was created a baronet, and in the same year he married again and took up his quarters in London. His second wife (by whom he had another family and who survived him for nearly forty years) was the daughter of John Clies, a Lisbon merchant. Rodney's letters to her and to his daughters, written whilst he was absent on the active service of his later life, give a very pleasing impression of his character in his own home. They are full of solicitude as to his family's welfare and of anxious inquiries after his children and "Loup" his favourite dog, and they show him to have possessed a much greater depth of feeling and a far more affectionate disposition than his contemporaries and subordinates ever credited him with. His pictures confirm the evidence that exists as to his fine physique and appearance.*

In 1771 Rodney went out again to the West Indies as Commander-in-Chief of the Jamaica station, and on accepting the appointment he was forced to give up the Governorship of Greenwich Hospital which he had held for six years. The apparent imminence of war with Spain, owing to her aggressive action in the Falkland Islands in the summer of 1770, made the Jamaica command an important one at the moment, but by the time that Rodney reached Port Royal in July, 1771, the dispute with Spain had blown over and his three years on the station were uneventful. In 1774

* Besides the picture by Gainsborough, there are two pictures of Rodney by Reynolds, of which the first was painted comparatively early in his career. The second of Reynolds's portraits, painted when the Admiral was an older man, is in St. James's Palace, and is familiar from its having been shown at both the Royal Naval and the "Guelph" Exhibitions. A copy of it is in the United Service Club. Another portrait, painted by Mosnier in quite the last years of Rodney's life, is in the Guildhall Library. There is also an exceedingly interesting picture by Pine in the Town Hall of Kingston, Jamaica, in which Rodney is represented during the action of the 12th April, 1782. He is surrounded by several of his officers and at his side is the little bantam cock who, in one of the broadsides from the *Ville-de-Paris*, was set free from his coop on the deck of the *Formidable* and perched himself on the poop, crowing and flapping his wings whilst the English were returning the French fire. Pine's portrait has never been engraved, but a reproduction of it was published in the *Jamaica Institute Journal* for April, 1895.

his command expired and no fresh appointment was given him. He returned to England, and for the next four years (to quote General Mundy's expression *) "the oppressive gloom of want, disappointment, and inaction hung over him." His pecuniary difficulties at the time were enormous. He was never a rich man and was evidently an extravagant one. The Northampton election alone must have cost him most of his private fortune, and he is said—though on rather untrustworthy authority †—to have been always addicted to gambling. To add to his embarrassments at this time the Navy Board neglected to let him have the salary undoubtedly due to him in his titular rank as "Rear-Admiral of Great Britain." Very soon after his return to England he was forced to retreat into the country to escape from his creditors. For a time he lived in secure seclusion at Havering in Essex with his friends, the Tathams, but very soon his debts drove him to leave England and take refuge in Paris. The move hardly mended matters. By the beginning of 1778 "he had, without as it would seem shaking off his English claims, contracted French debts to a considerable amount," and until they were paid he could not leave Paris.‡

Throughout this period of debt and depression § Rodney's efforts to obtain re-employment from the Admiralty had been unceasing, and now that war with France (inevitable from her recognition of the American States) was opening upon us they grew still more strenuous. That they were prompted partly by the state of his finances is obvious; but his letters at the time—full of anxiety to know what measures were being taken by the Government at home to meet the preparations being made by France—show that he thirsted for re-employment far more as a "means of serving his country" than as "an opportunity of honourably settling

* Mundy's 'Life of Rodney,' i. 162. General Mundy was Rodney's son-in-law.

† Wraxall.

‡ Hannay's 'Rodney,' p. 82.

§ In 1776 Rodney's second son was drowned at sea when in command of a sloop-of-war. Writing from Paris in 1778 he speaks of this blow as one which still "is almost constantly in my thoughts, and must ever prey upon my heart" (Letter to Lady Rodney, Mundy, i. 174).

with his creditors." * In his career throughout, indeed, nothing is more characteristic of Rodney than his absorbing determination to stretch his own powers, and—whenever he had the chance—the powers of others, to their utmost effectiveness "in the King's service." In this connection, his energy when serving in times of peace, and the alertness with which (often under scant official encouragement) he watched for any opening or means that might eventually "serve to damage His Majesty's enemies," are quite as remarkable in their way as his genius and courage in action. Neither the ill-health which was almost chronic with him, nor the personal disappointments which so plentifully chequered his career, served to damp this ever-evident aim. Equally characteristic was his complete and over-emphasised consciousness of his own powers. To a man at once so keen and so self-confident it was doubly galling to be "neglected" by the Admiralty and, "for want of a remittance to pay his debts," to be left "in an enemy's country" at a time when his own was likely to need all the service she could get.† The "total inattention" of his English friends finally induced him to accept the chivalrous offer made him by the veteran Maréchal de Biron. De Biron, stung by the insinuations made by the English press, to the effect that the English admiral was being unfairly prevented by the French Government from returning to serve his country, and "sensible" (says Rodney) "of the services I had rendered my country and of the treatment I had received," advanced the sum of 1000 louis; and by means of this loan Rodney was at last enabled, in May, 1778, to satisfy his Parisian creditors and to return to England.‡

He was now free to press his claims in person, and, placing "no dependence on the Admiralty," he pushed his interest with the king himself.§ In June, 1778, he became Admiral of

* 'Letters to Sandwich and to Lady Rodney,' Mundy, i. 167-182.

† Cf. Letter to Lady Rodney, March 20, 1778.

‡ The loan was almost immediately repaid by the help of the banking house of Drummonds. The details of this episode in Rodney's career are to be found in full in Mundy, i. 177-185, and Barrow's 'Life of Anson,' p. 328, and in the 'Mémoires de la Duchesse de Gontant' (Paris, 1892), p. 75.

§ *Ed. Rev.*, clxxv. 185.

the White, but for the moment there was no command vacant, and for more than a year he remained in London, living in a house in Cleveland Row. On the 1st October, 1779, when he was sixty years of age, Rodney was at length appointed to the command so inseparably associated with his name—that of the fleet in the West Indies.

The circle of England's enemies had now so widened that she stood practically "single-handed against the world." * In 1779, Spain having joined the league of France and America against her, she was threatened by a great combined fleet cruising in the Channel. In June of that year Gibraltar was besieged by a Spanish army and blockaded by a Franco-Spanish fleet, and Rodney's first duty on being appointed to his new command was to relieve the garrison there on his way to the West Indies. Hoisting his flag in the *Sandwich*, he sailed from Plymouth on the 29th December with twenty-one ships of the line and a number of store-ships. On the 16th January, 1780, he came up off Cape St. Vincent with the immediate object of his search, the squadron under Don Juan de Langara which had blockaded Gibraltar. Such was the secrecy with which the plan for relieving Gibraltar had been prepared at home,† that Langara was quite unprepared for the size of the English fleet and, with nine of his ships, he at once endeavoured to form a line of battle ahead southwards towards Cadiz. Rodney had before him the now historic and brilliant example set by Hawke at Quiberon Bay‡ as to the proper course to pursue under the circumstances, and "he at once ordered a general chase, the ships to get between the enemy and the land, and to engage as they came up with them." This was after two o'clock in the afternoon, and it soon fell dark. Rodney, though crippled at the time with gout,§ decided to continue the pursuit through very tempestuous weather. "Neither storm nor darkness stayed the brilliant rush of the English fleet, and the completeness of

* Green's 'History,' chap. x. sect. 2.

† Drinkwater's 'Siege of Gibraltar,' p. 86.

‡ See pp. 137, 138.

§ Mahan's 'Sea Power,' 500, n.

the result was commensurate with the vigour of the attack." * The action finally closed at two in the morning, and, of the nine Spanish ships engaged, only two, under cover of the storm, escaped. The English ships engaged were more than double the number of Langara's; but the peculiar circumstances under which the action was fought—"the darkness, the storm and the rocks to leeward" †—invested it with extraordinary interest. "It called," says Captain Mahan, ‡ "for the highest qualities of a seaman, and is not unworthy of comparison with Hawke's pursuit of Conflans."

The relief of Gibraltar thus secured, Rodney himself followed his store-ships thither on the 26th January. Three weeks later, leaving the bulk of the fleet to return to England, he sailed for St. Lucia. He arrived there and took over the command of the West Indian fleet on the 27th March (1780). De Guichen, in command of the French fleet, had already reached Martinique and was preparing an attack on one of the British West Indian Islands. § On the night of the 13th April he slipped to sea. Rodney immediately followed him, and on the 16th he sighted the French fleet between Dominica and Martinique, and a general chase ensued throughout the afternoon. At night Rodney formed his line of battle ahead, carefully keeping to windward of the French as "their manœuvres indicated a wish to avoid battle, which I was determined they should not." || The action which followed on the morning of the 17th April, 1780, was the bitterest disappointment in Rodney's life. In after-years he declared that his reputation ought rather to have rested on his combinations against De Guichen on this occasion than on his victory of 1782; ¶ "but Fortune . . . denied him success," says Captain Mahan, ** "when he most deserved it." He had informed every one of his captains that it was his intention to throw the whole force of his own fleet on to a part, only,

* *Ed. Rev.*, clxxv. 186.

† *Ibid.*

‡ 'Sea Power,' p. 500.

§ Laird Clowes's 'Royal Navy,' iii. 453.

|| Despatch of the 26th April, 1780.

¶ *Naval Chron.*, xxv. 404.

** 'Sea Power,' p. 499.

of De Guichen's.* On the morning of the 17th the two fleets were abreast of each other in parallel lines, but the English were in far closer formation than the French, who were extended over about twelve miles. Rodney's whole line was opposite to half (the rear and a part of the centre) of De Guichen's, the leading ship of the English van reaching a point just short of the exact centre of the whole French line. Soon after six o'clock Rodney accordingly signalled his intention of attacking the enemy's rear, "which signal was answered by every ship in the fleet." At noon when he made the signals for every ship to bear down on the enemy "agreeable to the 21st article of the Additional Fighting Instructions" and to engage, the Admiral's ship to be the example, "the order was obeyed in a manner which threw him into a paroxysm of rage."† Instead of falling upon the ships opposite them at the moment,‡ and regardless of the Admiral's orders as to keeping a close formation and following the example of his own ship, the captains in Rodney's van

* 'Dict. Nat. Biog.,' xlix. 84.

† Hannay's 'Rodney,' p. 128.

‡ Rodney's instructions and signals specifically showed that this was the course he desired his captains to pursue; and, writing subsequently to the captain of his leading ship, he says:—"You did not properly obey my signal for attacking the enemy, agreeable to the 21st article of the Additional Fighting Instructions, by bearing down instantly to the enemy's ship then opposed to you, but led to (their) van ship, notwithstanding you had answered my signal signifying that it was my intention to attack the enemy's rear. . . . Forgetting that the signal for the line was only at *two cables' length distance* from each other, the van division was led by you to more than *two leagues' distance* from the centre division" (*Nat. Chron.*, i. 382).

Mr. George Pritchard has kindly allowed me to consult an original copy (in his possession) of the actual "Additional Fighting Instructions" which, officially signed by Rodney, were in the hands of the captains under his command at this time. The 21st article prescribes the course to be followed when the signal made by Rodney was hoisted: "Every ship in the Squadron is to steer for the ship of the Enemy which, from the disposition of the two Squadrons, it must be her lot to engage, notwithstanding the signal for the Line ahead will be kept flying; making or shortening sail in such proportion as to preserve the distance assigned by the signal for the Line, in order that the whole Squadron may, as near as possible, come to action at the same time." Those who will read the descriptions of the engagement in Captain Mahan's 'Sea Power' (p. 379) and Mr. Laird Clowes's 'Royal Navy' (iii. 461), will realise the vital importance of the light thrown on the subject by these "Additional Fighting Instructions" which, according to Mr. Laird Clowes (iii. 461, n.), were not to be found.

kept on down the French line to engage those ships (in some cases miles away) which in the enemy's order occupied the numerical position corresponding to their own in the English. In doing so they followed the example set them by the leading ship and the rule of action traditionally observed in similar circumstances, and at the same time they shattered all the success of Rodney's scheme for throwing his whole force on to a part of the enemy's. His careful plans being thus upset, Rodney himself "showed that with them he carried all the stubborn courage of the most downright fighter; taking his own ship close to the enemy and ceasing only when the latter hauled off, her foremast and mainyard gone, and her hull so damaged that she could hardly be kept afloat."* But what had promised to be an inevitable victory was turned by the conduct of the captains referred to into a partial engagement with a negative result, and his unsparing censure of their action was not undeserved. In considering their conduct, however, it should be remembered that the example of Byng (then a still recent one) hardly encouraged others to break away from obsolete, if still stereotyped, methods of action. Rodney, moreover, had perhaps hardly impressed on them how entirely prepared he was to disregard a merely pedantic system. He had only just become their commander, and his attitude towards his subordinates is said as a rule to have been one of extreme reserve, hardly conducive to much interchange of ideas. He lived largely aloof from his captains—"neither asking for their friendship nor giving them his—asking only for that implicit obedience which he was ready to render to his own official superiors. He certainly cannot be said to have ever spared himself in his absolute devotion to duty, and he was hardly likely to spare those in whom he saw or suspected a dereliction of it. The insubordinate spirit which Sandwich's administration of the Admiralty had induced throughout the Service at the time must also be borne in mind in considering the scathing severity of his criticisms on the conduct of those responsible for the

* Mahan, 'Sea Power,' p. 380.

miscarriage of April 17th. The fleet in the West Indies certainly were none the worse for the lecture which Rodney read them after the action, or for the severe training to which he promptly subjected them throughout the following summer. It is easy, under the circumstances, to see why the Admiralty found it difficult to find a "proper flag officer to serve under him" at the time, one "who would be likely to second him properly and with proper subordination." * Eventually they were "obliged, in order to do the thing properly," to make a promotion, and in September, 1780, Hood was promoted to flag rank for the purpose. He was despatched in October to join Rodney with eight ships of the line. A happier selection from the standpoint of the Service, or one more personally acceptable to Rodney, could hardly have been made. If the personal relations between him and Hood afterwards became strained, it was, perhaps, but natural with two men each of them "by disposition a hard judge of others ;" † but it is difficult to overstate the debt which England owed to the simple fact of their being associated in the Service at this time.

After the action of the 17th April De Guichen did not give Rodney the weather-gage again. He sailed for France in August, and Rodney, ignorant of his destination and fearing that he might have gone to the North American coast, sailed with half the fleet to New York, where he arrived in September. Finding his presence there unnecessary, he returned to the West Indies as soon as the hurricane months were over, reaching Barbadoes in December.

In January, 1781, he was joined by Hood at St. Lucia, and at the end of the month he received orders to make a combined attack with General Vaughan on the West Indian possessions of the Dutch, who had just joined the coalition against England. He immediately seized their island of St. Eustatius, which was a notorious asylum for the American cruisers and the centre of a pernicious contraband trade,

* Sandwich's Letter to Rodney, July 14th, 1780.

† Letters of Lord Hood (Navy Records Society), Introd. p. xiii.

and he promptly confiscated to the Crown its immense accumulation of wealth. In doing so, however, he made no distinction between the public stores and the private property belonging to traders, and his proceedings were vehemently assailed in consequence by the Opposition at home. That he deserved quite all the characteristic declamation with which his conduct was denounced by Burke,* may be doubted; but his high-handed action was obviously quite unjustifiable, and it involved him subsequently in continual litigation. In February rumours reached him of a French squadron being on its way out to Martinique. Hood was despatched to intercept it, and subsequently he received an order from Rodney to move from the east to the west side of Martinique. This change—which Rodney appears to have thought necessary in order to keep open easy communication with St. Lucia and to prevent the four French ships then in Fort Royal harbour from slipping out †—proved a disastrous one, and Hood had protested against it at the time. When De Grasse, with twenty ships of the line, arrived in April, Hood—being to leeward and with an inferior force—was unable to prevent the enemy from getting into Fort Royal. If Rodney had himself proceeded to Martinique with his full force instead of attempting from St. Eustatius to direct operations from a distance, “we may fairly suppose that what did happen when he met De Grasse in April, 1782, might equally well have happened in April, 1781.” ‡ The information that had been given him, however, both as to the strength of the enemy and the probable time of their arrival was incorrect. His health, also, at this time had become so bad that very shortly afterwards he was compelled to return to England to recruit it during the hurricane months of the West Indies. He sailed from St. Eustatius on the 1st August. Hood (who was left in command of the fleet in his absence) proceeded with fifteen ships of the line to reinforce Admiral Graves on the North American coast, De Grasse having already sailed thither in order to blockade Yorktown.

* ‘Parl. Hist.,’ xxii. 208, 770, 778.

† Cf. Beatson, v. 171.

‡ *Ed. Rev.*, clxxv. 195.

Rodney reached England at the end of September and, after a very serious illness, was recruiting his health at Bath when, in November, the fatal news arrived of the capitulation of Yorktown. De Grasse was already on his way back to the West Indies in order to join the Havana fleet of Spain and, with a force (thus aggregated) of forty-nine ships of the line and troops numbering over 13,000 men, to fall on Jamaica and the remainder of our West Indian islands. It was imperative that Hood should be reinforced at once. Without waiting till the reinforcements were completed, Rodney, on an urgent summons from the king, at once took under his command such ships as were ready and sailed with them from Spithead on December 13th. After being baffled for several weeks by the westerly gales he finally weathered Ushant, and got into the open sea, on the 17th January, 1782.

The position of England in January, 1782, was even more critical than in the January of two years before when Rodney had sailed for Gibraltar. She "seemed in fact on the brink of ruin.* In the crisis of the American struggle, Ireland itself turned on her. . . . In her difficulties the hopes of her enemies rose high. Spain refused to suspend hostilities at any other price than the surrender of Gibraltar. France proposed that England should give up all her Indian conquests save Bengal. But the true basis of her world-power lay on the sea;" and the command of the Atlantic at the moment lay not with her but with the French fleet under De Grasse.

On the 19th February, 1782, Rodney, with his flag in the *Formidable*, at length reached Barbadoes after forcing his way through a succession of storms. Two days previously the island of St. Kitts—despite the brilliant effort to relieve it made by Hood †—had surrendered to De Grasse, and Hood now proceeded to join Rodney off Antigua at the end of the month. Throughout March Rodney remained at Gros Islet Bay, St. Lucia, and, by a chain of frigates stretched across the thirty-six miles of sea between St. Lucia and Martinique, he

* Green's 'Hist.' chap. x. sect. 2.

† See pp. 257, *seq.*

kept a continuous watch on De Grasse at Fort Royal. The French fleet were expected to sail thence at any moment in order to join the fourteen Spanish ships of the line off Hayti and to proceed with them against Jamaica. The English fleet, which now amounted to thirty-six sail of the line, was in terrible need of refit, the ships that had been engaged at St. Kitts being "in want of everything." All through the month of March Rodney, despite a violent attack of gout, was "working day and night getting his fleet refitted, provisioned and watered. There was no dockyard at St. Lucia, no victualling yard, no water-tank vessels—everything had to be done by the individual efforts of the ships' crews." * To this month of untiring preparation, and to the care which (owing to his having secured Sir Gilbert Blane's devoted services) was given to the health of his fleet, Rodney owed not a little of his ensuing success.

Both sides now saw that the final struggle was upon them, and "on the 5th April," writes Rodney †—

"I received intelligence that the enemy were embarking their troops on board the Ships of War and concluded they intended to sail in a very few days. Captain Byron of the *Andromache*, an active brisk and diligent officer, watched their motions with such attention that on the 8th instant at daylight he made the signal of the enemy's coming out and standing to the North-West. I instantly made the signal to weigh and, having looked into the Bays of Fort Royal and St. Pierre's where no Enemy's ships remained, I made the signal for a general Chase and before Daylight came up with the Enemy under Dominique, where both Fleets were becalmed and continued so for some time. The Enemy first got the wind and stood towards Guadaloupe. My van Division under that gallant officer Rear-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, received it next and stood after them. At 9 the Enemy began to canonade my van, ‡ which

* *Jamaica Institute Journal*, April, 1895, p. 116.

† Apology is hardly needed for giving, almost *in extenso*, Rodney's own account of the four days' manœuvring which led up to the victory of the 12th April. The despatch from which it is taken was not included among those published by General Mundy (cf. Mundy, ii. 226-255). It was sent to the Admiralty on the same day (April 14, 1782) as the despatch announcing the victory, and it makes the narrative of events continuous.

‡ "Sixteen ships of my rear were becalmed under Dominique," Rodney wrote afterwards to his wife, "and had the French fleet come down as they ought in all probability half my fleet would have suffered extremely; but they as usual kept an awful distance, and only made a canonade, in which, however, they did us

was returned with the greatest briskness. . . . The Enemy's Canonade ceased upon my Rear's approach, but not before they had done considerable damage; . . . but such was the steady behaviour of Sir Samuel Hood and the Ships of the Van that the Enemy received more damage than they occasioned. The night of the 9th Instant the Fleet lay to to repair their damages. The 10th they continued to turn to windward under an easy sail, the Enemy's Fleet continuing to do the same and always had it in their power to come to action, which they most cautiously avoided and rendered it impossible for me to force them in the situation they were in between the Saints and the Island of Dominique. On the 11th of April the Enemy having gained considerably to Windward and the wind blowing a fresh and steady gale, I made the signal for a general chase to windward which continued the whole day. Towards Sunset some of the headmost ships of the Fleet had approached near to one of the Enemy's ships* that had received damage in the late Action and had certainly taken her if Count de Grasse had not borne down with his whole Fleet for her protection, which brought him so near that I flattered myself he would give me an opportunity of engaging him the next day: with that view I threw out the signal for the form of sailing and stood with the whole Fleet to the southward till 2 o'clock in the morning, then tacked and had the happiness at daylight to find my most sanguine desire was near being accomplished by my having it in my power to force the enemy to battle."

It is evident that even on the 11th April De Grasse came very near to successfully forcing his way through the passage between Dominica and "The Saints" and getting to windward after all.† The delay caused by the necessity of bearing down for the protection of the *Zélé*, however, was fatal to his doing so. On the morning of the 12th April, Sir Charles Douglas, the Captain of the Fleet, reported the position of De Grasse's line—then spread over from nine to fifteen miles of water westward of "The Saints" isles—by telling Rodney that "God had given him his enemy on the lee bow."‡ An accidental circumstance almost immediately afterwards gave Rodney a chance of still further bettering his position. The *Zélé*, the French ship already damaged on the preceding day, had been further crippled during the night in a collision with De Grasse's flagship, and now—at 5.30 on

considerable damage . . . and I lost my best lieutenant and one of my brave captains killed—Captain Bayne of the *Alfred*."

* The *Zélé*.

† Cf. Laird Clowes's 'Royal Navy,' iii. 525.

‡ Hannay's 'Rodney,' pp. 187, 193.

the morning of the 12th—was being towed towards Guadaloupe and was only two leagues from the English van. Rodney forthwith made a feint at pursuing her, and when the French (as he had expected) once more bore down for her protection, he at once seized the opportunity of getting still further to windward of them. He then formed his line (the ships in close order at one cable's length) the rear under Drake being ordered to haul to the wind and, standing to the north-east, to lead into action as the van. The *Formidable* and the other ships of the centre followed, and Hood in the *Barfleur*, with the other ships of what had been the van, fell into line in the rear. The French line had meanwhile been very hastily reformed, standing to the south-east and in very extended order. The two fleets were thus "running along two lines which formed an obtuse angle, of which the apex pointed to the east."* Only eight of the French ships had reached and passed the point where the converging tracks of the two fleets intersected† when—shortly after seven o'clock—the *Marlborough*, the leading ship in Rodney's line came within range of the ninth ship in that of De Grasse, and the action began.

In point of strength—and apart from all question of tactics or *personnel*—the two forces were not unequally matched, but on the whole the English were superior. Rodney had thirty-six sail of the line as against the thirty to which the enemy were now reduced, and in respect of guns, too, he had a numerical advantage. The French armaments, however, were heavier than his, and their ships were, class for class, far larger. The *Ville-de-Paris* alone,—the magnificent flagship of De Grasse, which at an enormous cost had been built for the French Navy by the city of Paris—carried over 110 guns.‡

Once within range of the enemy, the captain of the leading ship, in obedience to Rodney's signal, put his helm up and

* Hannay's 'Rodney,' p. 195.

† Mahan's 'Sea Power,' p. 486.

‡ Ibid., p. 493. De Grasse sitting in the stern gallery of the *Formidable* on the day after the battle told Rodney that he considered the French fleet to have been the superior (Rodney's Letter to his wife, April 13, 1782). As to the comparative strength and capabilities of the two fleets, however, there seems to be a considerable difference of expert opinion.

heading to the north-west—exactly parallel to the French line, but in the opposite direction—led the fleet close along the enemy's line towards their rear. For more than an hour the two lines "slid by" each other so slowly (owing to the lightness of the wind) and so close that the damage wrought along his centre and rear by the English broadsides, and the carnage caused among his crowded crews, drove De Grasse twice over to attempt a palpably impracticable movement to alter his course. Soon after nine a shift of the wind to the southward made the French position still more helpless—it not only impeded those of their line which had still to run the gauntlet of the English fire, but it necessitated all their ships being turned to the right with their bows towards the English broadsides. In other words (to quote Mr. Hannay's appropriate simile) "instead of following one another in a line, they were suddenly spun round into the position of the half-closed lathes of a venetian blind." The English, meanwhile, could hold on their course as before. All the ships of Drake's division in the van continued to do so until they had cleared the French rear. For ten or twenty minutes after the shift of wind, the *Formidable* followed in their wake. Rodney had already passed and exchanged broadsides with the *Ville-de-Paris* and the three ships immediately behind her in the French order, and at 9.30 he had just drawn up with the *Glorieux*, when a larger gap than usual showed itself between her and the next ship, the *Diadème*, in the enemy's line. Availing himself of this opening, the moment he had the *Glorieux* on his starboard bow he luffed and broke through the French line * "pouring a broadside into the *Glorieux* to

* It is impossible here to deal with the questions which in after years arose in connection with this, the distinctive, feature of the fight of the 12th April. Is Rodney entitled to the whole credit of his manœuvre, or did he owe the general idea of it to Clerk's 'Naval Tactics,' and the particular suggestion of it at the moment to Sir Charles Douglas? The controversy caused by these questions has a literature of its own, and—among many other publications on the point—it is only possible here to refer the reader to those mentioned by Mr. Hannay, in Chapter XII. of his 'Rodney,' and to Clerk's 'Naval Tactics' (Introduction to 2nd Edition), the *United Service Journal*, 1830, Part II., and the pamphlet entitled 'Breaking the Line,' published in 1830. Mr. Knox Laughton ('Dict. Nat. Biog.,' xlix. 85) points out that no satisfactory evidence was

right and the *Diadème* to left as he went." So unpremeditated was the movement that Rodney had neither time nor means to signal a new order to the ships next to the flagship in order. None, in this case, was needed. The captains of his centre immediately behind him and Gardner in the *Duke* immediately ahead of him at once "penetrated his intention," and either followed him through the gap or broke through to join him. Almost at the same moment Affleck in the *Bedford*, the fifth ship behind the *Formidable* and the last of the centre division, passed accidentally through the enemy's line astern of their twelfth ship. He was followed by the ships of Hood's division in the rear, and the French line was now completely sundered in two places. Before eleven o'clock De Grasse's fleet lay in three widely separated portions. To the south-east were the twelve ships of his van. Next, in a confused group, lay the *Ville-de-Paris* and six other ships of his centre, crippled by the double fire which they had received from Hood's division on the one side and from the *Formidable* and her followers on the other. Still further to the west were the ships of his rear, which had been cut off from the rest of his line and were already heading westward. Drake's division and the leading ships of the English centre, having cleared the last ships of the enemy's rear, were now standing to the north and Rodney was free, if he wished, to re-form his line and, having the weather-gage, to reap the fruits of his manœuvre. The issue of the day was already, in reality, assured. "Every principle upon which a line of battle was constituted . . . was overthrown for the French and preserved for the English divisions which filed through."* For an hour at midday both fleets lay as they were, becalmed. Then as the easterly breeze sprang up once more, the ships close under De Grasse's flag, and the ships of his van still further to the east, headed slowly westward in produced to prove that the manœuvre was other than Rodney's own. "It is of course quite probable that Sir Charles Douglas called his attention to the gap in the French line; but Rodney's whole career shows him as a man quick to see an opportunity, prompt to seize it, tenacious to an extreme degree of his dignity and authority."

* Mahan's 'Sea Power,' p. 488.

an almost fore-doomed attempt to re-unite with those of his rear away to leeward. The English, flushed with the certainty of success, bore down on the already crippled ships of the enemy. By half-past five * four of the French fleet—each after a stubborn engagement—had fallen into their hands, and an hour later, after fighting to the very last, De Grasse with his own hands hauled down the French flag on the *Ville-de-Paris*. Six, at least, of the English fleet, including Hood in the *Barfleur* to whom she struck, were round De Grasse's flagship when she finally surrendered. Rodney then made the signal to bring to, and the action ceased. Immediately afterwards he wrote to Hood:—

"Many thanks, my dear friend, for your very kind congratulations ; 'tis with the sincerest truth that I must, with great justice, acknowledge that I am indebted to your very gallant behaviour that we have been so successful. . . . God bless you. Adieu ! Yours most affectionately,
G. B. RODNEY."

After the capture of the *Ville-de-Paris* part of the French fleet fled to Curaçoa, six hundred miles off, part to Guadaloupe and part to San Domingo.† That no attempt was made to pursue them was the one notorious blot in the conduct of the engagement—it is the more astonishing when we bear in mind the dominating desire that Rodney had shown throughout his life to "damage" to the utmost the king's enemies whenever he saw the chance. Hood, indeed, was more than mortified at his resting content with what he had gained. That the results which Hood pictured as still attainable‡ were really so to their full extent, may well be doubted ; but no one contrasting his letters written home immediately after the action with the "Reasons for not pursuing the enemy" which were written by Rodney and found amongst his papers by his heirs, can fail to see that he was well justified at the time in

* Letters of Lord Hood (Navy Records Society), p. 123.

† Mundy, ii. 261 ; Hannay's 'Rodney,' p. 210.

‡ Cf. Hood's letter to Jackson, April 16, 1782:—"Had I, my dear friend, have had the honour of commanding his Majesty's noble fleet on the 12th, I may, without the imputation of much vanity, say the flag of England should now have graced the sterns of *upwards* of twenty enemy's ships of the line."—Letters of Lord Hood (Navy Records Society), p. 104.

saying that his Commander-in-Chief might have made more of the victory ; and subsequently it was clearly seen that more results might still have been secured if Rodney had risked a further pursuit. The full weight of responsibility, however, as Captain Mahan observes in discussing this question,* can only be felt by the man on whom it is laid. Rodney did not need to be told, as Sandwich had told him † when he left England to join issue with De Grasse, that “ the fate of the Empire was in his hands ”—the phrase, however flowery, was not far short of the truth. When the *Ville-de-Paris* finally struck her colours at sunset on the 12th the fleet had been in action for nearly twelve hours. “ They had had,” as Sir Charles Douglas said, ‡ “ a great deal to do and it must be allowed that they had done it.”

The immediate and tangible effects of the victory of the 12th April, 1782—the destruction of the French *prestige* in America, the recovery of our command of the Atlantic, the saving of Jamaica and our West Indian Islands, and the terms it enabled us to make at the Peace of Versailles—belong rather to history than to biography. Its influences on the ephemeral position of political parties and on the naval tactics of the time are equally beyond the scope of this article. Nor do they determine its place in our history. To gauge the historical importance of the victory we have to appreciate in its widest bearings the crucial position in which England stood when Rodney sailed to the West Indies in 1782, to realise her vital dependence at the moment on the issue of his contest with De Grasse, and to consider what would have followed if he had failed, or been foiled, in his attack.§

* ‘Sea Power,’ p. 496. † Letter of January 2, 1782. ‡ Mundy, i. 257.

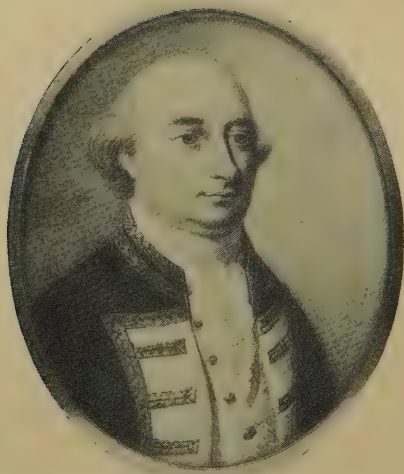
§ “The ignorance of Rodney’s claim to rank as one of half-a-dozen men on whose feats of arms primarily rests England’s position in the world, is, probably due to the fact that his great victory—the victory which saved the West Indies, which prevented a great French and Spanish fleet from falling upon what remained to England on the American continent, perhaps even from invading England herself—the victory which gave us the command of the Atlantic Ocean at the moment when we had lost the American Colonies, has never received a name which the people of England have been able to lay hold of. If the great naval engagement which destroyed the fleet of De Grasse—called variously “the battle of the Saints,” or “the battle of April the 12th”—had received from the

The despatch of the 14th April, 1782,* in which Rodney reported his victory of the 12th, reached the Admiralty on the 18th May. He had meanwhile been summarily deprived of his command by the Rockingham Ministry, who had come into office in March, 1782, and had despatched a political supporter—Admiral Pigot—to succeed him. Unfortunately for them, Pigot had just sailed when the news of the victory arrived. When he reached Jamaica in July, Rodney, who had proceeded thither after the engagement, returned to England. A peerage had been conferred on him, and the House of Commons had voted him a pension of £2000, in the preceding month. During the rest of his life he saw no more active service, although once, in the autumn of 1787, when he was already a prematurely old man, he again tendered his services to the king, “assuring him” (to quote his letter to Pitt) “that neither age nor infirmities shall ever make me decline obeying his royal commands, whenever he shall think my service may be advantageous to himself or the State.”

In the spring of 1792 Rodney died at his son's house in Hanover Square.

English sailors the name given it by the French, “the battle of Dominica,” it might have been, as it deserves to be, as well known as the battle of Trafalgar. Its results were quite as great as those achieved by the latter victory; and had Rodney's triumph received a definite and distinctive appellation, it might have taken nearly as high a place in the popular mind.”—*Spectator*, Oct. 17, 1891.

* Mundy, ii. 255.



John Watson.

COMMODORE JOHN WATSON.

X.

COMMODORE JOHN WATSON.

BY W. ROBERTS.

HISTORY is very largely made up of minor details, and of events which, insignificant in their beginnings, often develop into epochs. The earlier annals of the English in India are purely a succession of failures,—and it was, perhaps, because of these failures that the English triumphed where most other nations would have given the game up. But the small beginnings, which followed the first stages of successful commencement, were long in extending and slow in developing. An exhaustive account of the East India Company from its establishment in 1600 to the end of its rule in 1858 has yet to be compiled ; * and not until then will be completed the full roll of those to whose indomitable perseverance and untiring energy England owes the possession of this truly wonderful “colony.” In this long roll of illustrious men, I venture to assert that no one was more distinguished than Commodore John Watson, who for over fourteen years was Commodore and Superintendent of the East India Company Marine at Bombay and Surat. His name does not appear in biographical dictionaries, and in very few histories of India, but on his application to bear arms, February 10, 1767, he drew up a brief and modestly phrased

* Nearly all the early records of the East India Company which have been preserved are now at the India Office, Whitehall ; and I am indebted to the courtesy of Sir George Birdwood, and to Mr. W. Foster (the energetic secretary of the Hakluyt Society) of the India Office for permission to consult some of the voluminous records of the H. E. I. Co. there preserved. The third volume of ‘Letters received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East, 1615,’ edited by Mr. Foster, appeared whilst these pages were passing through the press.

list of his various "faithful endeavours to serve his king and country."

By the courtesy of Mrs. Wakefield, of Camalway Lodge, Kilcullen, Ireland, whose late husband was the last surviving male representative—a grandson—of Commodore Watson, I am put into possession of a small quantity of unpublished material by and relating to the subject of this memoir. The most important document of all is Watson's own "Journall" of the attack on Onore (or Honáwar) Fort, in the spring of 1768. This is accompanied by a Plan of the disposition of the attacking forces of the highest interest, it being perhaps one of the oldest documents of its particular kind in existence so far as the English in India are concerned. This has been redrawn from a tracing, and the reproduction herewith is about two-thirds of the original size.

John Watson was the son of James Watson, Esqre., of Brook Hill, in the County of Antrim, an old and well-known family in that part of Ireland, and now quite extinct except an unmarried elderly lady. Of John Watson's early career nothing is known, but as he was 54 years of age at the time of his death in December, 1774, he must have been born about the year 1720. He doubtless entered the service of the East India Company when quite a youth, and he first distinguished himself in 1748, when the city of Surat was besieged by Susdar Caun, "and the East India Company obliged to join the Nabob for the better security of their trade." Watson offered his services as a volunteer, and "with 150 seamen made a sally and beat the enemy from their entrenchments." He was on this occasion shot through the arm and another shot lodged in his leg. Shortly after the above-mentioned "sally," and upon a combined attack of military and marine, he was appointed second in post with Captain England who commanded the seamen upon that attack. Very early in this engagement Watson received a musket shot in his head, but, in spite of this, he pushed on, stormed the enemy's works, and he himself "killed their general by which even Susdar Caun [Safdarkhán] was brought to sue for peace." The success of the expedition was notified to the President and Council on the 16th December,

1748, and the incident of Safdarkhán's chief officer being killed is duly chronicled,* but not the name of the man who slew him.

But the troubles in connection with Surat were, so far from being ended, scarcely begun. In 1749 several barks laden with the Company's effects were seized in the river of Surat by a body of Ghenins, but Watson, with a party of sepoy, "pursued the enemy, fought and beat them," as he himself tells us, "and thereby recovered all the effects, amounting to a considerable value, and conveyed them to the Factory." In the same year Commodore (afterwards Sir William) James was promoted to the rank of commander, and two years later (1751) he hoisted his broad pennant as Commodore and Commander-in-chief. Of James's brilliant naval achievements it is not necessary to discuss here, but it may be pointed out that Watson could not have served under a braver or more able seaman.

The troubles at Surat culminated in 1751, when the Bombay Government decided to take Surat Castle. Watson was posted at Surat bar to pilot and conduct the Company's cruisers with their troops up the river into the castle of Surat; sundry vessels which brought ammunition and stores from the cruisers being stopped by the enemies' batteries, Watson (who was then lying wounded in his bed) ordered himself to be removed on board his own vessel, "which he brought up and anchored before the said batteries, and sustained their whole fire till every vessel had passed him in safety: the chief and council in the Factory, having expended all their ammunition, would have been reduced to the last extremity if supplies had not immediately been obtained. The commanding officer of the castle gave orders for several vessels to carry up the necessary supplies, but the service appearing so hazardous no officer would undertake the command." Upon this, Watson, "truly zealous for the public good, though in a wounded condition, was removed into a pinnacle, with ten barrels of gunpowder, which dangerous cargo he safely delivered; but out of fourteen brave fellows that attended him in that expedition, ten were killed" (Watson MSS. *penes me*).

* Cf. J. M. Campbell, 'Materials towards a Statistical Account of the Town and Island of Bombay,' i. 294.

We need not enter into an account of the expedition in 1755, under Commodore James, in conjunction with the Mahrattas to dispossess Toolajee Angria of his strongholds, Severndroog and Viziadroog, except to point out that, as the marine portion of the expedition consisted exclusively of the Bombay Marine—none of the king's ships being in port—it may be taken for granted that Watson was one of the captains. He himself has left us no record of having done anything on this occasion out of the ordinary run of his duties.* In 1759 Commodore James returned to England for good; nineteen years later he was created a baronet and obtained a seat in the House of Commons. Watson was, either immediately or very shortly afterwards, appointed to the command of the Company's marine, as will be seen from Mr. Low's 'History of the Indian Navy' (i. 148-9). The merchants of Surat had so frequently applied to the Bombay Government for protection from the rapacity and insults of the Seedee of Surat and his officers, that at length it was agreed to intervene by armed force. "An expedition was accordingly fitted out at Bombay, consisting of five of the Company's ships and a body of 850 European troops and 1600 seapoys. The whole was placed under the command of Commodore Watson, of the Bombay Marine, an officer of remarkable skill and tried ability, under whose orders the officers and men of the service had upheld the reputation they had earned under Sir William James."

Mr. Low deals at length with this important expedition, and his description is so interesting that it is impossible to resist quoting it: "The armament sailed on the 9th February, 1759, and the troops were landed at Dentilowry, about nine miles from Surat, where they encamped for three days. The

* This expedition must not be confused with one later in the same year, against Angria's capital Geriah. The naval commander in that affair (which finally crushed Angria) was the well-known Admiral Charles Watson (afterwards the naval commander in the reduction of Hoogly and Calcutta), and with him was Clive in command of the troops. Commodore James, who, as stated above, had commanded in the taking of Severndroog, was employed here to reconnoitre in his ship, which duty he carried out well. (See Charnock, 'Biography of Charles Watson.')

first operation was against the 'French garden,' where the Seedee had placed some of his troops, which were dislodged. A battery was then erected, on which were mounted two 24-pounders, and a 13-inch mortar; and, for three days, a heavy fire was maintained against the walls, but without effect. A council of war, composed of military and naval officers, was then convened, at which it was decided that the following plan of operations should be put into execution." Mr. Low then quotes Grose, a contemporary writer and traveller. "The plan," says Grose, "was that the company's grab of 20 guns and 4 bomb-ketches, should warp up the river in the night, and anchor in a line of battle opposite the Seedee's bundar, one of the strongest fortified places they had got. This they did, and a general attack began from the vessels and the battery at the appointed time on the 1st March. The captain's intentions in this, were to drive the enemy from their batteries and to facilitate the landing of the infantry at the bundar, whom he had embarked in boats for their transportation. The bomb-ketches made a continual fire until half-past eight, when a signal was made for the boats to put off and land under cover of the vessels. This proved very successful by the prudent conduct and gallant behaviour of Captain Watson, who landed the troops with the loss of only one man. They attacked the Seedee's bundar and soon put his troops to flight, with the loss of Captain Robert English, mortally wounded, Lieutenant Pepperell wounded in the shoulder, and some privates killed and wounded. Having gained this point and getting possession of the town with its fortifications, the next thing to be done was to attack the inner town and castle, for which purpose the 13 and 12-inch mortars were planted on the Seedee's bundar, and began firing as soon as possible at the distance of 700 yards from the castle and 500 from the inner town. About six in the evening the mortars began to play very briskly, and continued firing until half-past two the next morning, which unusual attack put the castle and town into such a consternation that they never fired a gun." It only remains to be added that the British forces entered the place on the 4th March, with drums beating

and flags flying, that a gratuity of 200,000 rupees (£20,000) was divided among the captors, and that the total British losses included 150 officers and men—a fact which plainly shows that the fighting must have been extremely hazardous and severe.

Soon after this event, in 1761, Commodore Watson assisted, under the command of Admirals Stevens and Cornish, at the blockade and conquest of Pondicherry, by which the French hold on India was for ever shattered. And four years later (1765), Watson further rendered the Company a great service in a joint command against the Matawns, and, “having taken all their fortresses and fleet, destroyed that nest of pirates and added their territories to those of the Company” (Watson MSS.).

For various reasons I think it may be assumed that Commodore Watson came home on furlough in 1766; his application to the Herald's College for a grant to bear arms is dated 10th February, 1767, and he must have left England for India either shortly before or soon after this application. The earliest official list of European seamen in the service of the East India Company—and returns of this character were sent to London several times each year—is dated the 25th November, 1768, whilst the last one is dated the 8th November, 1774, the intermediate lists also having his signature. These returns are now preserved at the India Office.

One of the most important events in Watson's career was the expedition against Onore Fort in the spring of 1768, and of this he has fortunately left a graphic and minute account. Onore (or Honáwar), it should be explained, is a seaport of Hindostan at the mouth of the Sheravetti (or Sharavati), a small river which communicates with a fine salt-water lake extending east nearly to the foot of the mountains. It was first taken by the Portuguese, then by the Dutch, who appear to have relinquished it, for in 1763 it was taken by Hyder Aly and was then considered as one of the possessions of the *rani* of Bednore. Hyder Aly caused docks to be erected for the purpose of building ships of war, but his plans were not completed when Watson appeared on the scene. The

following is Commodore Watson's own account of the expedition:—

“The Honourable the President and Council having resolved to set on foot an Expedition against the dominions of the Nabob Hyder Alley Caun on the Malabar Coast, the following force was appointed for that purpose, viz. :—

John Gouin, Esq., Major to Command on Shore.

European Infantry	. . .	400
„ Artillery	. . .	70
Sepoys	. . .	800
Pioneers	. . .	100
Artillery Lascars	. . .	50
		1420

John Watson, Esq., to Command the Fleet.

	Guns.	European seamen.	Native seamen.
Resolution . . .	40	130	80
Success Cruizer . . .	12	33	33
Lord Mansfield* . . .	26	103	—
Earl Chatham* . . .	26	105	—
Tartar Cruizer . . .	14	30	35
Drake „ . . .	14	50	30
Salamander Bomb . . .	10	12	36
Beagle Cruizer . . .	8	3	26
Fox „ . . .	8	6	26
Fly „ . . .	6	2	20
		474	286

On the 17 February the Forces being all embarked weighed anchor, and made the signal for the rest of the Fleet to do the same; on the 19th following the boats of the Fleet were

* It should be mentioned that neither the *Lord Mansfield* nor the *Earl Chatham* belonged to the Company's marine. They were regular traders in the service of the Company; but both happening to be at Bombay when the expedition against Onore was fitted out, they were pressed into service. From C. Hardy's exceedingly interesting little volume, 'A Register of Ships employed in the Service of the East India Company from 1760-1810,' it appears that the *Lord Mansfield* sailed from the Downs on the 8th March, 1767, and the *Earl Chatham* on the 3rd April of the same year, both were bound for Madras and Bombay. It is curious to note that both these vessels were lost, the *Earl Chatham* on the 30th October, 1768, and the *Lord Mansfield* went down in the Bengal river on the 7th September, 1773.

ordered to give chase to five Boats to the Southward, one of which they took and brought in ; and as she might be very serviceable upon the Expedition, a proper officer was put in command of her ; on the 21st being off Carwar, and apprehending that some of the Nabob's Fleet might be in there, I dispatch'd Commod. Ince of the *Success*, with the *Tartar*, *Salamander* and *Beagle*, to look into that place ; who returned in the evening without having seen any thing. The 23rd in the morning, perceiving some vessels in shore, I ordered the *Success*, *Tartar*, *Drake*, *Salamander* and *Beagle*, to give them chase. They returned in the evening and brought with them one three Mast, one two mast Grabb, and five Gallivats, belonging to Hyder Alley ; proper officers with some European seamen were sent on board the two largest ; the 24th having arrived off Mangulore, the principal Fort that belonged to the Nabob upon the sea coast, I threw out the signal for Forming the Line of Battle, and proceeded directly in, and anchor'd alongside the *Beckingham*, the Nabob's capitol ship, hailed her, and ordered her to send her captain on Board ; and he shortly afterwards came on board and surrendered his sword to me ; which I returned him again ; and then dispatched Lieut. Meryweather, and Mr. Southwell Trotter in six armed boats ; the former to take charge of the *Beckingham*, and the latter of a three mast Grabb that lay a little distance from her ; which they did without firing a musquet ; all the next day we were employed in getting everything in readiness for a landing, and stationed the *Tartar*, *Salamander*, *Fox*, *Beagle* and *Fly* cruizers to scour the beach and cover the troops in landing : the rest of the vessels were left to guard the mouth of the river, and had orders to suffer no boats whatever to go in or out of the river. The 26th in the morning the Troops were landed in the boats of the Fleet, forming four divisions ; about four miles to the northward, on a neck of land, between which, and the Fort, a branch of the river ran ; it being resolved to storm an octagon on the point of it, that commanded the mouth of the river. The next morning, I ordered 140 seamen of the Fleet to be landed for that purpose, and put them under the Command of Capt. Nisbett of the *Tartar*, but finding it impossible to get

everything in readiness that night it was resolved to defer the attack until the 28th. In the morning of the 28th about one o'clock 100 Grenediers and 180 Seapoys, under the Command of Capt. Chas. Boye, and 140 seamen under the command of Capt. Andw. Nisbett, the party appointed for the storm, with a strong body of Europeans and seapoys under the command of Capt. Robert Jackson to cover their retreat in case of a repulse, were ordered to advance about a mile towards the Factory, and then to halt until the moon went down, when they were to proceed to the attack, which they did ; and about 3 o'clock began to advance ; when they had approached within three quarters of a mile of the Battery ; the enemy's advanced centrye [sentry] fired at them, but did them no mischief ; and shortly afterwards a gun loaded with grape was fired at them from the Battery, but with as little success ; upon which the whole body were ordered to advance with all convenient expedition, and a party of 12 grenediers and 8 seamen, who were in the front with hand greneders, as soon as they came near enough discharged them over the walls ; and the seamen immediately fixed the ladders and mounted them, and were followed as fast as possible by the whole body ; and in about an hour all opposition ceased, and everything was quiet. The garrison consisted of about 300 men of which near 25 were killed in the storm, and about 30 wounded, not to mention those that might be wounded among the rest who escaped over the walls. We had only three or four wounded. In the evening the Major encamped with the remainder of the troops in a grove near the Battery ; and the engineers began to raise a Bomb Battery near the waterside to play upon the main fort across the river, which was opened the next day, and was kept playing all day. And it being resolved to storm the Main [Fort] the 1st of March in the morning, I ordered all the boats in the Fleet to come into the River, to transport the troops designed for that attack. The first of March about 4 o'clock in the morning, the major and myself, and all the troops, except Captain Anderson's division—who were left to protect the octagon battery and camp, and a party of Artillery to work the guns and mortars—embarqued in the boats, as were

likewise 140 seamen under the command of Captain Andrew Nisbett, and rowed for the Portugese Factory, which was a little to the south of the Fort, where we landed without any loss, though the enemy fired at us in crossing the river, from two or three different quarters ; and then advanced up the hill, near the top of which we were met by a party of the Enemy's Horse which had sallied from the Fort. But our troops advancing soon put them to flight, and we took possession of the Fort without any further opposition. In the above skirmish we had Capt. Nisbett and two private European Infantry wounded. In the evening we had the satisfaction to hear that a Fort to the southward, which Capt. Poynton had been dispatched to attack, upon our first landing, had surrendered, the whole garrison prisoners at discretion ; the 4th in the morning the major took the Field with all the forces, excepting Capt. Jackson's division of Europeans, and 150 seapoys ; and Capt. Robert Carruthers, of the *Drake* cruizer, was ordered to repair on shore and take charge of the octagon Battery, which was garrisoned with 50 seamen. I likewise ordered a body of seamen ashore to the Fort. From the 4th to the 9th I employed the carpenters, and a body of labourers in cutting down the cocoanut trees, and clearing the houses near the Fort in order to make an Explanade ; the former were likewise employed part of the time in fitting the prize vessels. On the 9th in the morning the major returned, and in a skirmish which the enemy had with an advanced party of our Troops the day before, the serjeant-major was killed, and Ensign Campbell and several private Europeans and seapoys were wounded. They however soon retreated upon a reinforcement marching to the assistance of our people. It was now resolved to attempt the reduction of Onore, another of the Nabob's Forts to the northward ; and 100 Europeans and 200 seapoys and 25 artillery, under the command of Capt. Jackson ; with the *Resolution*, *Earl of Chatham*, *Drake* and *Fly*, and three Ketches, and 8 Gallivats which were taken from the enemy, and manned and fitted for the occasion as well as possible, were the force resolved upon for this Expedition. The 14th the troops

embarked, and the 15th at 3 o'clock in the morning, weighed, with the land wind, and made the signal for the Fleet bound in y^e Expedition, to do the same; and the 17th arrived off Fortify'd, which lyes directly off Onore, and belonged to the Nabob; I sent a Flag of Truce in a Tony for a country boat to the Governor, requiring him to surrender the place. But on its approaching the shore, they fired at it; upon which they returned. The 18th in the morning the *Resolution* and *Earl Chatham* hauled close within 300 yards of the walls, and the rest of the Fleet who were ordered to go close in, brought up in their respective stations that had been appointed them; and about 10 o'clock we began to batter the works. The fire was particularly warm from the *Resolution* and [*Earl*] *Chatham*; the cannonading continued for near four hours; but finding we could do but little execution I determined to force a landing; the boats in the Fleet were accordingly manned with 40 soldiers, 40 seamen and 60 Seapoys; and we landed about 2 o'clock among the rocks without the loss of a man, or anyone hurt, though the enemy threw showers of stones at us from the tops of the precipices. We then proceeded to clear the works, in doing which we had one private soldier killed by a stone, and one seaman shot; but in a short time we were in quiet possession of the whole Island, and several of the inhabitants came and surrendered themselves. The 20th we were employed in preparing for the attack of Onore Fort. The next morning I ordered all the smaller vessels to proceed over the Barr of that River, to cover the troops in landing; and then myself, accompanied by Capt. Jackson, with all the Forces and a body of armed seamen embarked in the boats of the Fleet, and landed about one o'clock, within 600 yards of the Fort, up the river. And by the 24th following, by 12 o'clock, we had four Batteries playing at the same time upon the Fort; one Bomb Battery, consisting of 10 in. mortar, one Royal Howitzer, and 4 Cohorns, besides a 6 pdr. Field piece, which was fired occasionally; the 2nd battery had one 18 and one four pounder; the 3rd had 2 twelve pounders; and the 4th one six pounder; and so good a fire was kept up from them that we presently began

to make a breach in the wall; and the enemy [does dare] but seldom to fire a gun the whole day; by sunset we had almost made a practicable breach, when messengers came from the enemy, with proposals for delivering up the Fort: which were that the Governor and the garrison should have liberty to carry off their effects, and 26 horses belonging to the Government. They were rejected, and the answer returned was that the Governor should have his effects, but that he as well as the rest of the garrison, must surrender themselves prisoners of war: and that there should be a cessation of arms during the time of one hour. In which time a definitive answer was expected; but having waited till near 10 o'clock in the evening without receiving any reply, I directed the Batteries to play upon the Fort again, which they no sooner began to do than the messengers returned from the Fort, and requested we would cease firing, as they were willing to accept our offer, and would open their gates to us when we pleased. I however thought it most prudent to remain where we were until the morning, which we did; and the next morning an Ensign with a party of 40 men were ordered to take possession of the gates; and I then ordered the garrison to evacuate the Fort, one by one, and to be disarmed as they past out, and sent under a guard to the main body, except the Governor and his son who were permitted to keep their arms. The prisoners taken in the Fort were 11 officers, and 559 Seapoys, besides 37 women and children. We had in this siege one Lieut. of Artillery, two seamen and two Lascars killed; and 11 Europeans and 9 natives wounded; the enemy had about 15 killed and 30 wounded."

This closes Commodore Watson's hitherto unpublished version. It seems difficult to believe, but it is an undoubted fact, that, in spite of Watson's brilliant victory, Onore did not absolutely come into the possession of the British until 1799. The destruction of Onore fort was followed by a comparative calm. Like most other people in the service of the company Commodore Watson engaged in occasional speculations on his own account or in company with others. For instance, there is in the British Museum (Add. MSS. 29,

133, f. 195) a very interesting letter, written entirely by the Commodore, signed by a "L. J. Draper" as well as "John Watson," and addressed to Warren Hastings. It is dated Bombay, the 4th August, 1772, and intimates that the signatories had consigned the ship *Active*, Captain Walter Watts, "laden with freight and goods on our account to the Commander and Captain Cudburt Thornhill at your place," and "it is our intention if the ship will fetch a reasonable price, that she shall be sold." Also: "if the Company should have occasion to send round saltpetre or other goods by any other ships than those you or the Council may be concerned in, that you will be pleased to order a proportion of them to be laden in the *Active*, and as in consequence of the large supply of money which the Board here have requested from your Presidency, it may be convenient for the Hon. Company to receive bills in this place."

The story of the expedition against Thána, in which Commodore Watson was mortally wounded, is told from official documents in Campbell's 'Materials' (pp. 377-384), already cited, so that it is not necessary to enter exhaustively into the matter here. But it is beside our subject to indicate the very high opinion entertained of Commodore Watson's ability. "The situation of Thána" (observes the reporter of the Consultation or Select Committee, held on the 9th December, 1774), "the capital fort where our vessels must first proceed, is such as will not admit our vessels to approach it. Consequently the forces that do not go by land must proceed in boats or very small vessels. Though there can be no marine command equal to the rank of our superintendent, yet we much wish that Mr. Watson was employed on this expedition as we are perfectly satisfied from his approved good services on many similar occasions that his presence will very much contribute towards success. His knowledge of the country people and the confidence they have in him, is an additional motive for us to wish that he may be on the spot, as we are satisfied that his advice will be of the greatest use to the commanding military officer."

The expedition was under the joint command of Brigadier

General Gordon and Commodore John Watson, and it started on the 12th December. The joint command does not seem to have been particularly satisfactory; for on the 27th December the President and whole Board in Council not only complain of the siege before Thána "being protracted to so great a length," of the death of so many Europeans, but, "to add to our concern, this present unpromising appearance seems solely owing to the general's pursuing the counsel of others, and not hearkening to the advice of Mr. Watson who from his greatest experience was so able to have given him the best. Had the two small forts to the northward been attacked and taken, as Mr. Watson proposed, there is no doubt that our forces would have been in possession of Thána many days ago, and thereby many valuable lives saved."

Commodore Watson returned to Bombay on the evening of Friday, the 23rd December, 1774, "wounded and much hurt" as the official record puts it. He was, as a matter of fact, wounded on the 21st, the chief injuries being caused by a cannon-ball striking the sand close in front of him and driving particles of sand into the flesh all over the body. The official record continues thus:—"On the same day [27th December, 1774] at 3 P.M. John Watson, Esquire, departed this life, occasioned by the wounds he received before Thána the 21st inst. On the morning of the 28th December, 1774, the remains of the late John Watson Esquire were interred in the burying ground within the town walls. The same day, about $\frac{1}{4}$ before 8 P.M. arrived an express from the Brigadier General with advice that Thána Fort was taken by storm this afternoon about 3 o'clock."

It is not necessary to enlarge on the numerous exploits of this able naval officer, but it may be mentioned that the Company erected a monument in St. Thomas's Cathedral, Bombay, "as a testimony of his distinguished merit and eminent services." Mrs. Wakefield possesses a beautiful china dinner service, engraved with his crest, which was presented to Commodore Watson for his valuable services by the East India Company. There are two portraits of him, one, a

miniature, probably by Engleheart, also in the possession of Mrs. Wakefield, reproduced to form the frontispiece of this chapter, and the other an oil painting by an unknown artist. I venture to follow Mr. Low in thinking that to this brave officer may be applied the epigram from Tacitus' 'Life of Agricola,'—*Tu vero felix non vitæ tantum claritate, sed etiam opportunitate mortis.*

XI.

RICHARD EARL HOWE, K.G.

BY THE VISCOUNT CURZON, M.P.

THE second son of Emanuel Scrope Viscount Howe, in the Irish Peerage, who died in 1735 at Barbadoes, having held the office of Governor of that Colony since 1732, and his wife, the daughter of Baron Kilmansegge, Master of the Horse to George the First when Elector of Hanover, Richard Howe, the subject of this memoir, was born in London, March, 1725. He was educated at Westminster first, and from there went to Eton, entering the Navy at the age of fourteen as midshipman on board the *Severn*, a ship of 50 guns, commanded by the Hon. Edward Legge, son of the first Earl of Dartmouth.

The *Severn* formed one of a squadron, under Anson, fitted out for an expedition against Spain. Nothing much is known as to the manner in which Richard Howe conducted himself during the voyage, which was, perhaps, chiefly remarkable for the fearful storms which the squadron encountered, causing the ships to be dispersed, and their crews to undergo considerable privations.* But, at any rate, Howe succeeded in winning the approval of his commanding officer, and in his twentieth year was made lieutenant. In November, 1845, he was appointed to the command of the sloop-of-war *Baltimore*, in which, in the following year, with the aid of the *Greyhound* frigate, commanded by Captain Noel, he defeated, off the coast of Scotland, two French vessels of superior strength,

* In fact, the *Severn* and *Pearl* were so much damaged in the storms off Cape Horn that they returned home from that point. Hence Howe was not with Anson in the remainder of his voyage round the world. See above, p. 102.



Howe

which were carrying supplies and reinforcements to the Pretender. Commander Howe received a severe wound in the head in this action, which it was thought at first would prove fatal.

On his arrival in England he found that he had been raised to the rank of post-captain, at the early age of twenty, and, having been appointed to the *Triton* on the 20th April, 1747, he was ordered to sail to Oporto and Lisbon, where he fell in with the *Rippon*, whose chief officer was unwell. The two captains agreed to exchange ships, which being sanctioned, Captain Howe crossed the Atlantic for the Leeward Islands, whereupon Rear-Admiral Knowles, who at that time commanded the squadron at Jamaica, wrote to the Board of Admiralty, and asked that Captain Howe should join him; this showing that his services and merits, even now, were recognised and appreciated. The necessary leave having been granted, Captain Howe arrived at Jamaica—unfortunately, just too late to be able to take part in the action with the Spanish fleet off Havana on the 2nd October, 1748. The *Cornwall*, bearing the admiral's flag, suffered very much in this action, and, it having been deemed expedient to send her home in the spring, Howe was appointed to command her. News having arrived that a Treaty of General Peace had been signed at Aix-la-Chapelle on the 18th October in that year, he returned in the *Cornwall* to England.

Early in the spring of 1751, Howe was appointed to the *Glory*, 44 guns, and employed for the protection of trade on the coast of Africa. There he was enabled to render considerable service to some of the merchants of Cape Coast Castle, who had complained against the action of the Dutch Governor of Elmina, and gave evidence of that firmness and decision of character which afterwards so signally distinguished him during a lifetime devoted to the service of his country. It should be stated that between 1748 and 1751 he closely studied naval tactics, and in 1752, having been appointed to the command of the *Dolphin* frigate, he was employed in conjunction with a squadron, under Commodore Edgcumbe, in the Straits of Gibraltar, and in the Mediterranean, for the protection of trade and commerce.

In 1754 he returned to England; and in 1755, in command of the *Dunkirk*, a ship of 60 guns, joined the squadron of Admiral Boscawen, taking a prominent part in capturing two French men-of-war, the *Alcide* and the *Lys*. This action seems to have been a very smart one. In 1757 came the abortive expedition against Rochefort. The causes which led to its failure have already been mentioned in the life of Lord Hawke;* but it should be noted here that, in the only successful part of it, Howe greatly distinguished himself, showing conspicuous bravery and power of resource in the attack which was made on the Isle d'Aix. In this action he was in command of the *Magnanime*, of 74 guns, one of the finest ships of her class in the Navy, having been transferred to her from the *Dunkirk* after a long period of continuous service in the latter vessel.

Sir John Barrow, in his 'Life of Howe,' gives the following account of the action of the 23rd September:—

"On the 8th September the squadron left Spithead, and on the 22nd anchored in Basque Roads. On the 23rd the vice-admiral (Sir Edward Hawke) prepared to take the Isle d'Aix. Two French ships of the line were at anchor off the Island, and on seeing the approach of the squadron they slipped their cables and prepared to proceed up the Charente. About the middle of the day, as the ships approached the island forts, the latter opened their fire. The *Magnanime* had been ordered to leave, but Captain Howe stood on direct for the fort with that set resolution which never forsook him, reserving his fire until he had advanced to within forty yards of the fort, when he brought up with a spring on his cable, and opened so tremendous and well-directed a fire, that in about half an hour the enemy were completely driven from their guns, and surrendered."

The credit which he won in this action led to his being made commodore of a squadron fitted out for the purpose of attacking certain places on the coast of France. He hoisted his pennant on the *Essex*, and with the Duke of Marlborough, who was in command of the land forces of the expedition on board, sailed from England on the 1st June, 1758. This was the first of three expeditions sent under his command to harass the French coast in the same year, in the last two of which

* See p. 134.

he greatly distinguished himself : in the attack on Cherbourg completely destroying the harbour and forts, and burning a number of the enemy's ships ; whilst at the disaster of St. Cas, by his heroic example and splendid indifference to personal danger, he undoubtedly saved the lives of a great many soldiers and seamen in most difficult and trying circumstances. It is unnecessary here to give an account of the brilliant victory of Quiberon, which has already been described.* It will suffice to note that the *Magnanime* was one of the leading ships, and was engaged both with the *Thésée* and *Héros* in the course of the action.

As a proof of the fact that Commodore Howe had gained the confidence and esteem of the King, it may be mentioned that Prince Edward Augustus, Duke of York, then nineteen years of age, was entrusted to his care at this time. Shortly before the close of the war Howe married Mary, daughter of Chiverton Hartopp, Esq., of Welby, in the county of Leicester, and by the death of his brother, George Augustus, Viscount Howe, who was killed before Ticonderoga when serving under General Abercrombie, inherited the family title and estates.

In 1763 Lord Howe was appointed to a seat on the Board of Admiralty under Lord Sandwich, and in June, 1765, he accepted the important office of Treasurer of the Navy, which he retained till 1770. In October of this latter year he was made Rear-Admiral of the Blue and Commander-in-Chief of the fleet destined for service against Spain in the Mediterranean in the event of war breaking out. This war, however, did not take place, but in 1775 he was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral of the White, in the following year receiving the command of a squadron despatched to America, in consequence of the revolt of the American colonies.

Lord Howe arrived off Halifax on the 1st July, 1777, his brother, Sir William Howe, being then in command of the land forces of Britain in that continent. He then proceeded to New York, and having joined Lord Shulldham's Fleet on the 14th of the same month, he appears to have left

* See above, pp. 137-139.

Sandy Hook on the 23rd with a fleet of 267 sail, together with a considerable body of troops destined for the reduction of Philadelphia. They were so much impeded by the vagaries of the weather that it was not until the 14th August that this fleet reached the Chesapeake.

On the 29th January, 1778, Lord Howe was made Vice-Admiral of the White, and in March of that year obtained the same rank in the Red. But there was now a new enemy to meet, for the French Government made a defensive alliance with the revolted colonies. Accordingly we find him placed in a position of great anxiety and difficulty, for whilst he was engaged in operations against the Americans, and had told off a portion of his fleet for the purpose of destroying some of their ships, suddenly the French fleet, in great strength, commanded by Comte d'Estaing, anchored close to Sandy Hook, where Lord Howe and his small squadron were. This was, indeed, a trying moment for the British admiral. He had a greatly inferior force under his command to oppose the French, while at the same time he had to watch the proceedings of the American general, Lincoln, who was besieging Rhode Island. Lord Howe, by a series of masterly manœuvres, drew the French admiral from Rhode Island, thus saving it, together with nearly 7000 men, from the enemy's hands, besides keeping the island in the possession of the king. Had he risked an action with the French fleet, so far superior in numbers and strength to the British, and failed, there can be little doubt but that New York would then have been lost, and the position of our troops in America at that time would have been a most critical one.

In September, 1778, Lord Howe resigned the command of the North American fleet, and sailed for England. In 1782 he received the rank of Admiral of the Blue, and on the 20th April in that year he was created Viscount Howe of Langar, in the county of Nottingham.

On the 11th September, 1782, Admiral Lord Howe sailed from Spithead, with thirty-four sail of the line, for the purpose of relieving Gibraltar. This he effected on the 11th October, in spite of the combined fleets of France and Spain, numbering

forty-six sail of the line. It appears to have been a most masterly achievement carried successfully through in a very brilliant and effective manner. Mason says of this action—

“Lord Howe always spoke of it to his dying day as the greatest he had ever performed, and as the only one of which he claimed the sole merit to himself.”

Howe was criticised for not having engaged the combined fleet on this occasion, but he had accomplished the purpose for which he had sailed from England, namely, the relief of Gibraltar. The Spaniards were in possession of both shores, the ships of the allied fleet had numerous ports to which they could retreat for the purpose of refitting and repairing any damage they might sustain in battle at sea, whilst the British ships had no such advantage. Then, too, the narrowness of the seas where such a battle would have had to have been fought out, and the difficulties of manœuvring in the strong current of the Straits, certainly seemed to have justified Lord Howe in not following the allied fleet in their retreat to Cadiz. For the skill and courage displayed upon this occasion the British Admiral received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament. The Corporation of London, in Common Council assembled, ordered an historical picture of the siege and relief of Gibraltar to be executed.

Mr. Fox, in speaking of the relief of Gibraltar, said it was not in England only that the character of Lord Howe was admired. A foreigner of distinction had written from Paris in the following terms :—

“Every one here is full of admiration at the conduct of Lord Howe ; all praise his bravery and humanity ; all wish to take his conduct for their example. This makes us think that in your country a court-martial will be appointed to try him whenever he arrives in England.”

In 1783, on voting the Navy estimates, Captain John Luttrell took occasion to notice that he had no doubt that a more essential piece of naval service to this country never was performed, and that it ought to be ranked amongst the foremost of those gallant exploits which had raised his lordship's

name so deservedly high in his profession, and in the eyes of our enemies.

Howe succeeded Keppel as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1783, but resigned in April of the next year, again accepting the office in the Pitt Ministry, and holding it till July, 1788.

In 1784, Lord Howe, at that time First Lord of the Admiralty, appointed Nelson to the command of the frigate *Boreas*, and as showing, in some degree, Nelson's opinion of Lord Howe, Mahan tells us that when asked to whose favour he owed this appointment, Nelson replied—

“You ask by what interest did I get the ship. I answer that having served with credit was my recommendation to Lord Howe. Anything in reason I can ask I am sure of obtaining from his justice.”

Again and again we see that Howe valued and recognised the services rendered by Nelson as a young captain in the West Indies. According to Mahan, Howe wrote a private letter to Nelson, asking the latter to call upon him as soon as he came to London, and after a short interview intimated how completely he was satisfied with the services that he had rendered, by offering to present him to the king. The presentation took place at the next levee, when George III. received Nelson graciously. This was at a time when Nelson does not appear to have been very well contented with the conditions then existing in the service, and when it has been alleged that he even threatened to resign his commission. Thus it may be said that by the tactful intervention of Lord Howe at this particular juncture, Nelson's great talents and conspicuous ability were preserved for the benefit of his country.

In July, 1787, Lord Howe was made Admiral of the White, receiving an English earldom in 1788. He was appointed to the command of a fleet intended to operate against the Spaniards in 1790, but peace having been concluded, no battle took place.

After the Revolution, the war with France broke out in 1793, and in that year Lord Howe obtained the chief command

in the Channel, gaining next year, off Ushant, the great victory which is known as that of "The Glorious First of June." It is interesting to bear in mind that this is practically the only military or naval engagement in the annals of British warfare that is not known by some territorial name. The French fleet upon this occasion consisted of twenty-six ships of the line, and the British of twenty-five. Ten of the French ships were dismasted, and seven were captured; one of them, however, the *Vengeur*, sank as she was being towed away.

It is not possible to better explain what really happened on this eventful day than by quoting the official account sent by Lord Howe to the Admiralty, and the following despatch is the plain story of this most important and momentous victory:—

"*Queen Charlotte*, at sea, June 2, 1794,
"Ushant, E. half N., 140 leagues.

"SIR,

"Thinking it may not be necessary to make a more particular report of my proceedings with the fleet, for the present information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, I confine my communications chiefly in this despatch to the occurrences when in presence of the enemy yesterday.

"Finding, on my return off Brest on the 19th past, that the French fleet had a few days before put to sea, and receiving on the same evening advices from Rear-Admiral Montagu, I deemed it requisite to endeavour to form a junction with the rear-admiral as soon as possible, and proceeded immediately for the station on which he meant to wait for the return of the *Venus*.

"But having gained very credible intelligence on the 21st of the same month whereby I had reason to suppose the French fleet were then but a few leagues farther to the westward, the course before steered was altered accordingly.

"On the morning of the 28th the enemy were discovered far to windward, and partial actions were engaged with them that evening and the next day.

"The weather-gage having been obtained in the progress of the last-mentioned day, and the fleet being in a situation for bringing the enemy to close action the 1st instant, the ships bore up together for that purpose between seven and eight o'clock in the morning.

"The French, their force consisting of twenty-six ships of the line, opposed to his Majesty's fleet of twenty-five (the *Audacious* having parted company with the sternmost ship of the enemy's line, captured in the

night of the 28th), waited for the action, and sustained the attack with their customary resolution.

"In less than an hour after the close action commenced in the centre, the French admiral, engaged by the *Queen Charlotte*, crowded off, and was followed by most of the ships of his van in condition to carry sail after him, leaving with us about ten or twelve of his crippled or totally dismantled, exclusive of one sunk in the engagement.

"The *Queen Charlotte* had then lost her fore-topmast, and the main-topmast fell over the side very soon after.

"The greater number of the other ships of the British fleet were at this time so much disabled, or widely separated, and under such circumstances with respect to those ships of the enemy in a state for action, and with which the firing was still continued, that two or three even of their dismantled ships, attempting to get away under a sprit-sail singly, or smaller sail raised on the stump of the fore-mast, could not be detained.

"Seven remained in our possession, one of which, however, sank before the adequate assistance could be given to her crew, but many were saved.*

"The *Brunswick*, having lost her mizen-mast in the action, and drifted to leeward of the French retreating ships, was obliged to put away large to the northward from them. Not seeing her chased by the enemy, in that predicament I flatter myself she may arrive in safety at Plymouth. All the other twenty-four ships of his Majesty's fleet re-assembled later in the day; and I am preparing to return with them, as soon as the captured ships of the enemy are secured, for Spithead.

"The material injury to his Majesty's ships, I understand, is confined principally to their masts and yards, which I conclude will be speedily replaced.

"I have not yet been able to collect regular accounts of the killed and wounded in the different ships. Captain Montagu is the only officer of his rank who fell in the action. The numbers of both description, I hope, will prove small, the nature of the service considered; but I have the concern of being obliged to add, on the same subject, that Admiral Graves has received a wound in the arm, and that Rear-Admirals Bowyer and Pasley, and Captain Hutt of the *Queen*, have each had a leg taken off; they are, however (I have the satisfaction to hear), in a favourable state under those misfortunes. In the captured ships the numbers of killed and wounded appear to be very considerable.

"Though I shall have, on the subject of these different actions with the enemy, distinguished examples hereafter to report, I presume the determined bravery of the several ranks of officers and the ships' companies employed under my authority, will have been sufficiently denoted

* His sea-chest and some splinters from the masts of the six French ships Lord Howe took on the "Glorious First of June," 1794, with the names of the vessels in question on them, are at Gopsall.

by the effect of their spirited exertions ; and I trust I shall be excused postponing the more detailed narrative of the other transactions of the fleet thereon for being communicated at a future opportunity ; more especially as my first captain, Sir Roger Curtis, who is charged with this dispatch, will be able to give the further information the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty may at this time require. It is incumbent on me, nevertheless, now to add that I am greatly indebted to him for his councils, as well as conduct, in every branch of my official duties ; and I have similar assistance, in the late occurrences, to acknowledge of my second captain, Sir Andrew Douglas.

“ I am, with great consideration, sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ HOWE.

“ P.S.—The names and force of the captured French ships is transmitted herewith.”

The news was received by the country with a feeling of relief which, perhaps, has never been surpassed.

On his arrival at Spithead after this great victory, Lord Howe, then seventy years of age, was greeted with joy and enthusiasm. On the 26th June, King George III. and his queen, with three of the princesses, and attended by his principal Minister, went to Portsmouth, and proceeded to pay a visit to Lord Howe on board his ship at Spithead. His Majesty there held a naval levee, and presented the admiral with a diamond-hilted sword, valued at 3000 guineas, also a gold chain, to which was hung a gold medal struck for the occasion. It is understood that the king wished to invest Lord Howe with the Order of the Garter, but it seems that the vacant Ribbon had been already disposed of elsewhere, and it was not until six weeks after the termination of the mutiny at St. Helens and Spithead that the admiral received the Ribbon and star of the Order rendered vacant by the death of the Marquis of Bath.

In a letter dated 8th December, 1796, Windsor, the king said that he bestowed the Garter on Lord Howe out of regard for the Navy, and to mark his Majesty's appreciation of the victory so signally gained on the 1st June, 1794. “ He ” (Lord Howe), the king said, “ knows very well I meant to do it on the last vacancy.” The Corporation of London presented him with the freedom of the City in a gold box, and Sir John

Barrow says that he was offered a marquissate, which he declined.

The thanks of both Houses of Parliament were voted unanimously to Lord Howe and to the admirals, officers, seamen, marines, and soldiers under his command, for the most brilliant and decisive victory obtained over the French fleet on the 1st June, 1794. His reply to both Houses was as follows :—

“The *Queen Charlotte*, at Spithead, June 18, 1794.

“MY LORD,

“Acknowledging my obligation in respect of the very flattering terms in which your Lordship has been pleased to make known to me the highly esteemed honour conferred upon me, by the unanimous resolution of thanks of the House of Lords signified by your letter of the 14th instant, I am to intreat that you will have the further goodness to assure their Lordships of the deep impression I shall ever retain of their condescending notice.

“The merit I would assume consists in my good fortune, inasmuch as I held the chief command, when so many resolute principal and subordinate officers, as well as brave men, serving under their orders, were employed at that time in the Fleet. And I must add, that if there is cause for triumph in the late defeat of the enemy at sea, it is truly the triumph of British sailors, whose animated and persevering courage, I believe, has in no instance ever been exceeded. I shall therefore have a great increase of happiness in obeying the commands of the House of Lords, by communicating to those several descriptions of persons the sense their Lordships have designed to express of their good conduct.

“I have the honour to remain,

“With the greatest respect, my Lord,

“Your Lordship’s most obedient humble servant,

“HOWE.

“To The Right Honourable the Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain.”

“The *Queen Charlotte*, at Spithead, June 21, 1794.

“SIR,

“Favoured with your letter of the 17th, and the communications of the resolution of the House of Commons on the happy event of the late actions between His Majesty’s ships under my command and the Brest fleet, I am to request you will have the goodness to assure the House of the most sensible impression I shall ever retain of the honour thereby conferred upon me, from which conviction, that earnest endeavours may thus, in the indulgent sentiments of the House, obtain the applause due to eminent services, great encouragement will naturally result for exciting future naval commanders to merit such testimonies of approbation.

"The appointment of the House to make those resolutions known which regard the commendable exertions of the admirals, captains, inferior officers, seamen, and soldiers of the fleet will be conformed to without delay.

"I am further to intreat that you, sir, will be pleased to accept of my very grateful thanks for the obliging terms in which you have signified those declarations of the House to me, and that you will be persuaded of the great respect with which

"I have the honour to remain, sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"HOWE.

"To The Right Honourable the Speaker of the House of Commons."

When it is borne in mind that, perhaps, at no previous period had France possessed so powerful or efficient a fleet as that which Lord Howe, now sixty-nine years of age, was called upon to meet, it is strange that after a victory received in the way this one was, there should be found those who would be willing to criticise its completeness, and it is well that we should consider everything in connection with the battle before we attempt to form a definite opinion on this point. For instance, the writer of the review in the *Spectator* of January, 1838, apparently held the opinion that in the latter part of his life Lord Howe suffered from shyness and want of nerve.* Again, the following words are attributed to Nelson, and appear in Mahan's life of that great admiral—

"If we only make a Lord Howe's victory, take a part and retire into port, Italy is lost."

It is, however, quite certain that Sir Edward Codrington, than whom very few men could have had a better chance or opportunity of observing what actually did happen during the anxious days which immediately preceded Lord Howe's victory in 1794, did not hold that opinion. Codrington was at that time junior lieutenant on the *Queen Charlotte*, the admiral's

* A lieutenant having reported a fire in the ship near the magazine, Lord Howe said, "If that be the case, sir, we shall have a further report of the matter," and proceeded to dress himself. The officer having returned, much excited, and saying, "You need not be afraid, sir, the fire is extinguished," the Admiral, evidently ruffled, replied, "Afraid? What do you mean by that? Pray how does a man feel when he is afraid? I need not ask how he looks!"

flagship, and his testimony, therefore, is of very great value as to this portion of Lord Howe's career.

In the course of a conversation in January, 1832, with King William IV. at the Pavilion at Brighton, Sir Edward Codrington remarked to His Majesty that it was a great pity and a great loss to the profession and the country that no person had written a Life of Lord Howe. Besides being one of the greatest sea officers we had ever had, his servitude embraced a long period of the most interesting part of Naval History, and that his conduct was an example of honesty and uprightness as well as persevering adherence to duty which should be held forth to the succeeding generations. He further suggested His Majesty ordering some proper person to undertake it.

The following interesting conversation is taken from Sir Edward Codrington's Notes upon Sir John Barrow's Life of the Admiral :—

Previous to the 29th May, Lord Howe, in conversation on naval tactics with Lieutenant Codrington in the *Queen Charlotte*, observed that if he had his choice in engaging an enemy with a good English fleet under him he would choose to do so by night, giving as his reason that the greater the difficulties to be encountered the more would the superiority of discipline and seamanship of the British fleet tell in the encounter, and he considered that a good English fleet in high order and discipline would in those circumstances of difficulty have a great advantage over a French fleet of equal strength.

With this conversation in his mind, Lieutenant Codrington, when Lord Howe was speaking to him of the French fleet on one of the days just preceding the 1st June, said, "I suppose, my lord, from what you were saying lately, that if we come up with the French fleet at night, you will attack them at once?"

Lord Howe answered, "No, I require daylight to see how my captains conduct themselves."

In order to show that Lord Howe never feared just criticism of his actions, the following extract is interesting. Sir Edward Codrington said that upon one occasion Lord Howe remarked—

"In case of going into battle, or on the conduct of any event, make your observations freely as to your own opinion of the mode of proceeding to your superiors in command. I say it in reference to myself; for instance, make your remarks freely as to your own opinions of what is right or wrong, and even write them down, but take care to keep them to yourself." Refer to your remarks at a later period, and you will either by that time have found the error of your judgment or you will have had it confirmed by your own experience."

Comparisons are odious, we are told, but perhaps the opinion may be expressed, after a careful study of the best accounts of the action that ended in the victory of The Glorious First of June, and of the various battles in which Lord Nelson was engaged, that Lord Howe would have been fortunate indeed if he had had the same support from his officers that was given to Lord Nelson at a later date. Sir Edward Codrington says that after the action he spoke to a lieutenant of the *Gibraltar*—one of the British ships—and said to him—

"Floyd, how is it that you were such cowards in the *Gibraltar*? The only ship you engaged was the *Queen Charlotte*."

His answer was—

"You would be more surprised if I told you we were not cowards, and this is the reason, our Captain Mackenzie is about the stupidest man possible."

The two particular signals which it was always understood Lord Howe would use—"Each ship to take her opponent" and "Engage to leeward"—were made before bearing down; and the captain of the *Gibraltar* asked his lieutenant if either of these signals had ever been made.

Another officer who commanded one of the British ships engaged in this action, according to Barrow, appeared before a court-martial, and the charge being proven against him, though his personal courage was pronounced unimpeachable, the verdict was, "that he be dismissed from the command of His Majesty's ship *Cæsar*."

Again, to show that some, at all events, of the British ships were very much crippled after the action, the *Queen*—Lord Gardiner's ship—had lost her mizen-mast, and, according to Codrington, was a considerable way down to leeward, and in

danger of being cut off by the enemy, nine sail of which, under their admiral in the *La Montagne*, were retreating with the wind on their seaboard ; whereupon Lord Howe, in great anxiety, called to Sir R. Curtis, "Go down to the *Queen*, sir ; go down to the *Queen*." The answer given was, "We are a mere wreck ; the ship won't steer." Lord Howe's reply was, 'Then send everything else, sir, directly.' Codrington declares that some of his captains did not obey the admiral's signals on the 29th, and certainly it is proved that he in his flagship, the *Queen Charlotte*, deemed it necessary to set them an example, and actually passed through the rear of the French fleet single-handed, urging the rest to follow him by the signal for a general chase.

Two of the British ships, the *Leviathan* and the *Queen*, were in danger of being cut off by the French fleet, and again, single-handed, he bore down to their support.* There was little of shyness or want of nerve displayed now by Lord Howe. Codrington tells us that, turning to those by whom he was surrounded, and shutting the little signal-book which he always carried about him, he said—

"And now, gentlemen, no more book, no more signals ; I look to you to do the duty of the *Queen Charlotte* in engaging the French Admiral. I don't want the ships to be bilge and bilge, but if you can lock the yard-arms so much the better, the battle will be the sooner decided."

Whether the victory of the 1st June, 1794, can be called a partial victory, or an opportunity lost, after a fair consideration of the facts of the case, seems at least to be a matter of very considerable doubt. The French on that occasion, according to Mason, had twenty-nine sail of the line to the British twenty-five ; but even supposing, as some other biographers state to be the case, that the French fleet consisted of twenty-six sail and the British fleet of twenty-five, it is practically certain that, between the commencement of

* Barrow says of this exploit, "His breaking through the line, and brushing the ensign of Rear-Admiral Villaret Joyeuse's flag-ship on the one side, and grazing, on the other, the *Jacobi*'s mizen shrouds with her jib-boom, was an exploit which has not been equalled—though approached nearly by Collingwood years afterwards in the Battle of Trafalgar, when the *Sovereign* cut the line and breasted the stern of the *Santa Anna*."

the fighting on the 29th May and the termination of the action on the 1st June—that is, during the fog of the 31st May—Monsieur Villaret was joined by a fresh squadron of five ships under Admiral Nyelli, thus allowing the French Admiral to detach five of his ships which had been disabled in the action of the 29th May. As a result of Lord Howe's naval tactics upon that occasion, six French ships were taken, a seventh sent to the bottom, and the rest were put to flight, most of them in a shattered condition.

Brilliant as was Nelson's great victory at Trafalgar, Mahan, in the following paragraph, tells us that, even upon that occasion, several of the enemy's ships succeeded in escaping :—

“ All five ships of the allied van which passed to windward of the *Victory* were cut off and captured by the *Minator* and the *Spartiate*, the other four continued on the wind to the south-west and escaped to sea. By the surrender of Villeneuve, the chief command of the combined fleets remained with the Spanish Admiral Gravina. The latter, at a quarter to five, fifteen minutes after Nelson breathed his last, retreated to Cadiz, making signals for the vessels which had not struck to follow him ; ten other ships, five French and five Spanish, in all eleven sail of the line, made good their escape into port.”

Mahan talks of Lord Howe's high professional opinion, and it should be remembered, in considering this particular part of our subject, that the victories of the Nile in 1798, Copenhagen in 1801, and the defeat of the combined fleets of France and Spain at Trafalgar, were preceded by the defeat of the French Fleet on the 1st June, 1794, and the victories of Cape St. Vincent and Camperdown in 1797, and it does not seem unreasonable to assert that the spirit and morale of the British officers and sailors was undoubtedly strengthened by the success and lustre thrown upon the naval strength of Britain by those great and splendid triumphs.

It certainly cannot be more difficult to complete a series of triumphs in naval warfare than it is to have to begin them. Just as it can be said that it was of assistance to Lord Howe, Lord St. Vincent, and Admiral Duncan, to have known of Rodney's splendid success on the 12th April, 1782, so it is

permissible to suggest that the chances of success in 1798, in 1801, and again at Trafalgar, were not lessened by the victories won over the French fleet by the three admirals mentioned.

An admiral who was in the battle of the 1st June observed—

“The first of June was the first general action fought in the course of the war, and led to many glorious results. Had it been the last, not one of the French ships would have been allowed to return to port.”

Sir John Barrow says that Lord Howe in 1799, not many months before his death, on hearing of the splendid victory of the Battle of the Nile, wrote thus :—

“I will only say of the splendid achievements of Nelson, that one of the most remarkable features of the transactions consists of the eminently distinguished conduct of each of the captains of the squadron ; perhaps it never before happened that every captain had equal opportunity of distinguishing himself in the same manner, or took equal advantage of it.”

It appears that Lord Nelson, in the Battle of the Nile, followed Lord Howe's example in assigning to every commander his opponent, and it does not seem improbable to suppose that if he (Nelson) had not been supported by his officers and his orders implicitly obeyed, his whole plan of operations would have had to be altered, and it is possible that the completeness of the victory in question would have been considerably marred.

We are told by Sir John Barrow that a vice-admiral, who also served in the two actions of the 29th May and the 1st June, 1794, stated that he had no hesitation in declaring that his opinion was then, and time has since fully confirmed it, that not only the fate of England, but perhaps of Europe, mainly depended on the decision of that remarkable and eventful day.

Although, perhaps, in the course of the long war which followed, victories with larger immediate results may have been won, in none can it be said was conspicuous courage, skill, and determination, more admirably displayed, than in Lord Howe's conduct and management of the operations upon that momentous occasion. Perhaps the opinion may

be expressed, that what happened upon that day had a not unimportant bearing upon many of the victories and triumphs which fell to the lot of the British fleet under the skill of a Duncan, a St. Vincent, and a Nelson in after-years.

To show how complete was the satisfaction at the result of Lord Howe's victory, some quotations from the speeches made in the House of Lords at that time are here given. Lord Grenville, in moving a vote of thanks to Lord Howe, called the victory lately obtained over the French Navy—

“one of the most brilliant actions that ever the page of history recorded. It was fought with the greatest skill, and with the usual bravery of British seamen against an enemy of superior force. Never was an action fought with greater bravery ; never was the skill of Lord Howe more exemplified or more successfully put in practice. His manœuvres were of the most masterly kind, and his courage did credit to his profession.”

The Duke of Grafton said—

“he had been in habits of intimacy with the noble earl (Howe) for five-and-thirty years, and in every naval station he filled, from that of a subaltern to that of a commander, his conduct when put to the test always called for applause, and merited the thanks of the public.”

He drew attention to Lord Howe's services in the three last wars—at Rhe, when he commanded the *Magnanime*, in silencing a battery by an effort of skill and courage perhaps unparalleled in naval history. He asked the House to remember—

“that with an inferior force, when the navies of France, Spain, and Holland were against us, he maintained the honour of the British flag, and preserved the mastership of the ocean.”

And he finished up by mentioning the eulogium of Frederick of Prussia on Lord Howe's abilities, who said he was the greatest naval commander in the universe.

The Duke of Bedford congratulated the country on this signal and decisive victory, by which the French Navy was crippled in such a manner as to put it out of their power to do this country any material injury.

And the Duke of Clarence added his praises to those already expressed of Lord Howe's great naval abilities, and

called the action of the 1st June "a glorious and complete victory." At the same time he asked leave to remind the House, as a proof of Lord Howe's great abilities, of the Relief of Gibraltar, an act for which his lordship had been praised by every naval officer in Europe.

On the 9th August, 1794, Lord Howe again took up the command of the Channel Fleet, but during the greater part of 1795 and 1796* he was compelled to remain on shore owing to ill health. In May, 1797, he gave up his command, but in this year he rendered to his country in connection with the mutiny of the fleet at Spithead and Portsmouth, perhaps one of the most important services, even in a career like his, full of notable events and brilliant exploits.

In connection with this outbreak in the fleet at Spithead, it should be remembered that Lord Howe resigned his command early in 1797, and though he had been succeeded by Lord Bridport, it was to the veteran admiral that several petitions were sent from many of the ships' crews. These he forwarded to the Admiralty, writing to Sir Peter Parker, the Port Admiral, and to Lord Bridport, to try and find out the real reason for the disturbance, and causes of the insubordination which had broken out. It is necessary for the purpose of this memoir to bear this fact in mind, for it shows that, whether he was suffering or in good health, Lord Howe's mind was always keenly alive to everything that concerned the fleet and sailors of his country; and it is remarkable that, though at this time he had actually resigned all active naval command, he was called upon by the king, Government, and the seamen themselves, to bring to the consideration of the grave situation which had thus been created his great tact and sense of fairness and justice, which alone could successfully grapple with a position so dangerous to the credit and very safety of the country. It may also be stated, as an interesting fact, that the first application which reached him came from the sailors themselves. They had always looked upon him as in truth the "Sailors' Friend," and even at a time when there was so much discontent and insubordination

* In this latter year he was appointed General of Marines.

(this not without some reason, in so far as we can fully understand the statement of their grievances) it seemed but natural that they should first turn to him and submit their case to his sense of justice.

When the mutiny broke out at Portsmouth, a Board of Admiralty, consisting of Lord Spencer, Lord Arden, and Rear-Admiral Young, with Mr. Secretary Marsden, went down from London to discuss the whole question with Lord Bridport, Admiral Gardiner, and three of their colleagues. In the end a great part of the terms demanded by the sailors was agreed to by the Board of Admiralty, and it was hoped that everything was now satisfactorily settled. For a time this was so, but whether owing to certain debates which took place in Parliament at this time, or to an order issued by the Board of Admiralty on the 1st May to commanding officers of the fleet, which contained some paragraphs of a character which were considered unnecessary and offensive both by officers and men, or whether it was due to the slow fulfilment of certain of the promises which had been made, the fact remains that a second mutiny broke out on the 27th May on the ships at St. Helens and Spithead. We now see how great was the confidence felt by the king and the Government in Lord Howe's judgment, and his high sense of duty led him at once to obey the call and to go to Portsmouth (though he was certainly in a most unsatisfactory state of health), invested with full powers to bring matters, if possible, to a complete and satisfactory conclusion. His must have been indeed a difficult task, but it is reasonable to suppose that the appearance of the man, who had so frequently led them to battle and to victory, who had ever been considerate to those whom he had led, would in the end prevail; for such, indeed, was the case, and order and discipline was restored throughout the fleet as a consequence of his visit. The first ship he visited was the *Royal George*, Lord Bridport's flagship, and he there entered into conversation with the crew, and reasoned with them upon their grievances. They stated that they were perfectly satisfied with what he had proposed, but they told Lord Howe that they could not answer for the crews of the other ships

and advised that he should visit each in succession. This he did, being carried round the fleet in a chair which is now at Gopsall.

So satisfactory was the settlement arrived at upon this occasion that the delegates representing the seamen requested to be allowed to row in procession to St. Helens with bands of music, and to return Lord Howe public thanks for his services and for the manner in which he had conducted this business to a satisfactory result. On the Sunday Lord Howe went on shore, and was received with the utmost enthusiasm, alike by the sailors and by a very large assemblage of people who had come together at Portsmouth ; in fact, the enthusiasm of the sailors appears to have exceeded all bounds, and the venerable admiral (he was then in his 72nd year) was carried on the shoulders of the delegates to Government House. Practically, with this great and noble service to his country, the active career of Lord Howe ends.

He was fortunate in that even the inexorable decrees of fate not only gave to him a length of life and opportunity to perform great and noble services in his country's cause, but also permitted him to see them appreciated and crowned to a peculiar degree by the gratitude and affection of those with whom for so many years of his active life he had been associated in times of war and of peace.

This peaceful triumph achieved by Lord Howe at Spithead, taking into consideration the grave problems he had to solve, in that critical period of our country's history, is worthy to rank as high as many of those great victories on sea and land which have from time to time been won by the determination, skill, and courage of our soldiers, sailors, and statesmen.

He died on the 5th of August, 1799, in the 73rd year of his age, at his house in Grafton Street, Piccadilly, after having suffered much from ill health for a considerable time.

His remains were buried in the family vault at Langar, in Nottinghamshire, the funeral being carried out in a manner free from ostentation and unnecessary show, which was so

entirely in accordance with his views and tastes when living. The following inscription was placed on the coffin :—

“ RICHARD HOWE,
Earl and Viscount Howe,
Viscount Howe, and Baron Clenawley, in Ireland,
Admiral of the Fleet,
General of His Majesty's Marine Forces, and
Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter.
Died 5th of August,
1799,
Aged 73 years.”

His lordship having died without male issue, his Irish honours descended to his brother, General Sir William Howe ; the English titles of Earl and Viscount were extinct. His eldest daughter, Charlotte Sophia, and her heirs male claimed the English barony ; and from her is descended the present Earl Howe, great-grandson to the admiral. The baroness was married to Mr. Penn-Assheton Curzon, eldest son of Viscount Curzon, and after his death, the second time to Sir Jonathan Wathen Waller, Bart. Louisa Catherine, youngest daughter of the admiral, married Lord Altamont of Westport, Ireland, afterwards created Marquis of Sligo, whom she survived, and married a second time Sir William Scott, afterwards Lord Stowell.

On the 3rd October, 1799, Mr. Dundas, on proposing a monument to be erected to the memory of Earl Howe, pronounced in the House of Commons the following eulogium :—

“ It is my intention to lay before the House a Motion upon which I do not think it necessary to say many words. I am persuaded I am not singular in the feelings I entertain in consequence of the lamented death of the late Earl Howe. There can be but one unanimous sentiment pervading the country as to the propriety of not suffering that noble Lord to go out of the world without publicly testifying the regard due to his Memory. On various occasions his Majesty, with the concurrence of this House, has shewn his regard for eminent services by individuals ; and whenever his Majesty has thought proper to distinguish anyone by conferring exalted honour on him for the services rendered the country, this House has never failed to interpose and second the intentions of His Majesty, by conferring a substantial and honourable reward. In

the present case, however, no consideration of that kind has occurred. The Noble Lord, by his own merit, was advanced to a seat in the other House, and from the situation of his family there was no occasion to remunerate him in a pecuniary point of view. There therefore only remains one way by which the House can manifest its sense of his services, and that is by the erection of a monument to his memory. To his respectable family it will afford a considerable degree of consolation for the loss they have sustained by being thus deprived of their head, to find that his merits have not been forgotten by his country. To the public it is of importance to keep alive the remembrance of the brilliant services by great and eminent characters. To every generous mind it is of importance that such services should be distinguished, as there is nothing that can more stimulate to the performance of brilliant actions than certainty of having them recorded to posterity. On these grounds, without any further observation, I shall move, That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that his Majesty will be graciously pleased to give directions for the erection of a mounment in the Cathedral of St. Paul to the memory of Admiral Earl Howe, with an inscription expressive of the eminent services rendered to his country, in the course of his long and laborious life, and particularly by the important service performed by his brilliant and decisive victory over the French fleet on the First of June, 1794.”

A splendid monument was accordingly erected in St. Paul's from a design by Flaxman—a full-length figure of the earl. On the front of the platform, on which Minerva appears on the right, and the prow of the *Queen Charlotte* on the left, is the following inscription :—

“ Erected at the public expense to the memory of
ADMIRAL EARL HOWE,
in testimony of the general sense of his great and meritorious services
in the course of a long and distinguished life, and in particular
for the benefit derived to his country by the brilliant
Victory which he obtained
over the French Fleet off Ushant on the first of June, 1794.
He was born the 19th of March, 1726, and died 5th August, 1799,
in his 74th year.”

From 1758 to 1782 Howe represented Dartmouth, where he is always remembered for having given the quays to the town, thus conferring a great boon on that place, then a great point of departure for the Newfoundland fishermen ; but he does not appear to have spoken very frequently whilst in the House of Commons. When, in 1782, he went to the House

of Peers, it is on record that he took part in several debates, notably those on the peace in 1783, his defence of the Superannuation of Captains in 1788, and lastly, in his 72nd year, those on the Mutiny in the Fleet.

Mason, in his 'Life of Richard Earl Howe,' says of Lord Howe's Parliamentary style that it was—

"Compendious, strong, pointed, and to the purpose. His speaking resembled his fighting: no idle prelude, close action was his aim. He was altogether superior to the idea of professional jealousy, while he utterly abhorred every species of detraction."

His answer to the Mayor and Aldermen of Portsmouth, on their presenting him in June, 1794, with the freedom of their borough, is a good specimen of the characteristic manner in which Lord Howe expressed himself upon public occasions:—

"Gentlemen, knowing the deliberation with which you select the persons on whom you confer this honourable distinction, I cannot but be flattered by it. I receive it as the representative of the able officers and brave men of the fleet, by whose courageous behaviour the victory, which it is the object of this action to commemorate, was obtained."

It appears that Lord Howe could never have been rightly described as a rich man. Sir John Barrow says of him, after he had retired from active service—

"His fortune was moderate, but fully equal to his expenses. All that he now received, after fifty-seven years of unremitted service, was the pay of General of Marines, about £1800 a year, half-pay included. He had no pension, having, it was believed, declined the offer of one, after the Battle of the First of June."

Sir Edward Codrington calls him a great and exemplary admiral, and he says that, had Lord Howe been treated with the same fairness by the biographer and the historian as some other great and conspicuous figures in our national history, he would, perhaps, have shone forth as the brightest example in the whole batch of naval history. Mahan says of Lord Howe—

"Though formal and unbending in outward bearing, he was a just and kind man, and one fully appreciative of professional worth."

To Lord Howe the country owed the first advances in

signals and evolutionary science by which the Service was distinguished in the later years of the long and eventful war in which we were engaged.

According to a well-known authority, "Lord Howe is entitled to the exceptional praise of never failing to bear himself with credit and success in any of his enterprises. In person he was tall and well-proportioned. His countenance was strongly marked, somewhat harsh in expression except when softened by his genial smile, and dark in complexion, although the sobriquet of Black Dick, by which he was known in the Navy, was not due to this circumstance, but to a mezzotinto portrait of himself which hung in his cabin."

No man ever did more good service during a long naval career—for fifty years he was fighting and administering. Always considerate of his men, by whom he was respected and beloved, he was scrupulously fair and just in awarding praise to them and to his officers. He has left a reputation for coolness, gallantry, and seamanship second to none.

"Let Curzon holde what Curzon helde."

"These are thy triumphs, Britain! Thine alone,
Great guardian of the altar and the throne,
To speak in thunder to the world around,
And grasp the trident of the Deep profound.

"Still shalt thou brave, wide ocean's stately queen
Her rage all impotent, with looks serene,
Shew thy great chiefs, to foes untaught to bow,
A Duncan, Vincent, Nelson, and a Howe."



Graves

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THOMAS LORD GRAVES,
ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE.

XII.

THE RIGHT HON. THOMAS LORD GRAVES OF GRAVESEND, LONDON- DERRY, ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE.

BY THE LORD GRAVES AND COLONEL FRANK GRAVES
(LATE 20TH HUSSARS), COMMANDING 83rd REGI-
MENTAL DISTRICT, BELFAST.

THE family of Graves can be traced to a period before the Conquest, about which time, under the name De Grava, it passed into England from Bourdeaux, Gascony, and settled finally in Yorkshire. The name underwent several changes, for instance, John de Grevis was in the army of King John, his great-grandson was called Thomas de les Greves, and their descendants spelt their name variously. Beamsley and Clackheaton, Yorkshire, were the places whence the Graves family spread.

The more noted men of the name were : Sir Joseph Graves, a Member of Parliament and first Lord Mayor of York in the time of King Edward VI. ; also Hugh, a member for York in several Parliaments during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

Lord Graves is directly descended from John Graves of Beamsley, Yorkshire, whose son Richard was the father of Richard, the head of the Mickleton Graves, Gloucestershire, and of Colonel William Graves, the head of the Irish branch.

There is a magnificent portrait of the above-named John Graves in Mickleton House, in his 102nd year, by Cornelius Janssens. John died in 1616, at the age of 103, and was buried at St. Martin's, Ludgate. His two sons, Richard and William, were great favourites of Oliver Cromwell, who made

the former Receiver-General and Clerk of the Peace for Middlesex ; and it is of him the Protector used to say, " Little Pot, soon hot," owing to his smallness of stature and heat of temper.

William was a trusted commander in Cromwell's army, who, before being sent in command of a force to Ireland, held a command at the siege of Bristol, and was appointed custodian of the unfortunate King Charles I. when he was conducted from the camp of the Scots at Newcastle to Holmby House in the year 1647.

William arrived in Ireland, and on the conclusion of his military duties was, of course, granted land, etc., as a reward ; but, like a wise man, anticipating the restoration of the Monarchy, he realised his landed property and returned with his two youngest sons to England.

His two eldest sons remained in Ireland. Henry Claymore, the eldest, born in 1652, was the ancestor of many notable divines, including a bishop and several deans, as also, curiously enough, of quite a number of military men.

On the other hand, James, the second son, was the ancestor of numerous naval men of high rank and repute ; in fact, there is no family in the United Kingdom that can show such an extraordinary family history in connection with the Navy as the Graves family since their settlement in Ireland.

Colonel William Graves' great-grandson Samuel was an admiral ; his great-grandson John was father of four admirals serving at the same time ; John's uncle, Thomas, was an admiral, and he, again, was the father of Admiral Thomas, Lord Graves of Gravesend, Londonderry, and of Admiral Richard Graves. Together with the foregoing eight admirals, and in the same line of direct descent, are quite a number of captains, commanders, and lieutenants of the Royal Navy, some of whom are now alive.

A notable feature in the career of Lord Graves was that his service commenced under the command of Commodore Medley, who was at the time Governor of Newfoundland. This fact should be borne in mind because, late in his service, he was fortunate enough, by a marvellous exhibition of self-

reliance and cool daring, to expel a much superior force of French from that island, and thereby, once for all, save it to the British Empire.

Mr. Graves was quite a boy when his career began, and, owing to the peaceful state of things in Newfoundland, he was able to apply himself closely to his naval studies and gain considerable knowledge of his profession.

Shortly after war broke out with Spain* he was appointed to the *Norfolk*, 80 guns, commanded by his father, Captain Thomas Graves. He served on board this ship when Admiral Vernon attacked Carthage,† in which attack the *Norfolk* led the van on the approach to the harbour batteries.

The *Norfolk* shortly after returned to England, but was sent out very soon to the Mediterranean, where Mr. Graves served till the end of the operations in that quarter. He was promoted lieutenant on the 25th June, 1743. He was shortly after transferred to the *Romney*, 50 guns, which, however, had no part in the action against the fleets of France and Spain near the islands of Hyères, February, 1744. This action and other circumstances led to the trial of the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Mathews, at which Lieutenant Graves was an important witness.‡

Lieutenant Graves next served under Admiral Lestock, in the unfortunate expedition against Port L'Orient, and, on the death of the admiral soon after, he was transferred to the *Monmouth*, commanded by Captain H. Harrison, in which ship he served till the end of the war, and took part in the battle of May 3rd, 1747, which ended in the total defeat and capture of the whole French fleet, under Admiral Jonquière, by Admirals Lord Anson and Sir Peter Warren.§

He was still further fortunate, for in the ensuing October, under Lord Hawke, he served in the *Monmouth* in the sharp engagement which ended in the defeat of the French under De l'Étenduère, during which action the *Monmouth* was severely engaged with several ships, and was terribly knocked about. ||

* See above, p. 83.

† See p. 88.

‡ See p. 127.

§ See p. 107.

|| See p. 130.

Peace soon followed, but Graves could not be idle, so he set to work and soon passed the necessary tests in fortification, gunnery, and engineering ; he also became proficient as a linguist.

He then had two periods of service on the coast of Africa, under Commodores Buckle and Stepney.

In 1754 Admiral Lord Anson appointed him to his first command, the sloop *Hazard*. This appointment was in every way most fortunate for him, for, as the circumstances have elsewhere been described—

“At the breaking out of the war next year, he, with others, was ordered off Brest, to look for the French grand fleet under Macnamara, which was rumoured to be destined for North America ; and having the good luck to fall in with them when returning into the port of Brest, stood twice across their line, and ascertained so exactly the force of every ship that he was able to transmit a circumstantial as well as a positive account to Lord Anson at a critical moment. His lordship immediately made him a post-captain as a mark of his satisfaction, and promised him his future friendship.”*

From this moment Graves' advancement and future were assured.

He was appointed to command the *Sheerness* on the 8th July, 1755, but for four years seems to have had an uneventful experience.

In 1759, when in command of the *Unicorn*, he captured a fine privateer off St. Malo, armed with 20 guns and carrying a crew of over 200 men. Later in the year he took two other privateers of the same stamp.

His next step on the ladder of fortune and fame was an important one to himself and the country he served, for in 1761 he was posted to the *Antelope*, 50 guns, and despatched to North America, and was appointed to the important position of Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Newfoundland and its dependencies.

It was as Governor of Newfoundland that the strongest features of Graves' character were revealed, for we read in a Naval History published in 1813 a very concise account of

* The *European Magazine* for September, 1795, quoted by Charnock.

the circumstances under which he saved the island from the French in face of tremendous odds ; his action there also proves the great value of the education he underwent in fortification and engineering.

I give the following extract *verbatim* :—

“ On his arrival off the American coast in the following year he learnt that a French squadron, under M. de Tiernay, with a body of land forces, had taken St. John’s, and meditated the conquest of the whole island. Upon this intelligence he pushed through a frozen sea filled with dreadful floating islands of ice, and at great risk, for Placentia. He sailed directly into the harbour, and, contrary to the advice of the captain of the man-of-war there, as well as of the Lieutenant-Governor and all the officers, landed and assumed the supreme command. By his spirit he encouraged the military of both services into a resolution to defend the place against the French forces, should they march, as was expected, to its attack.

“ He instantly set about repairing the old fortification and erecting a new fort, forwarding a detail of his situation to General Amhurst and Lord Colville, in America, praying their united aid in the recovery of St. John’s, and, if possible, the capture of the enemy’s squadron. The general and admiral lost no time in supplying a force for the purpose, Lord Colville coming himself with his squadron, and the general sending his brother with a body of troops. So soon as they arrived off St. John’s, Colonel Amhurst called a council to determine the proper place for landing his soldiers, but adopted the advice which the commodore (Graves) gave, although different from that of the other officers : succeeding in all his operations, the French were defeated, and the town, with its whole garrison, taken. M. de Tiernay, under favour of a dark night at the commencement of a N.W. breeze, stole out of the harbour with all his ships, and made the best of his way for France, although they were much superior in force to the English.”*

Commodore Graves, the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Newfoundland, obtained great *kudos* for his judgment and abilities under the trying circumstances detailed. Few men finding themselves in face of immensely superior forces, and in a minority of one in the councils of his friends, would have dared to prove his self-reliance and courage to the extent of carrying out his own convictions in the admirable manner he did.

During his term of government he not only showed strength of character in firmness and just judgment, but he

* *European Magazine* for September, 1795, quoted by Charnock.

evinced statesmanlike qualities, and on his return to England he submitted to the Ministry a number of proposals for the better government and security of the island, which were at once adopted.

On his way home he had the good fortune to come up with the *Marlborough*, 74 guns, returning disabled from the siege of the Havannah, and rescued the captain and ship's company a few minutes before the ship went down all standing.

In 1764 Lord Egmont, First Lord of the Admiralty, received numerous complaints from the merchants and others on the west coast of Africa touching the conduct of several of the governors of the coast forts. Commodore Graves was selected as a fit and capable man to proceed to the coast and inquire into the circumstances. He was sent out in command of a squadron, and given plenary powers to act as he thought best. We are told that "he performed this service with so much discernment as to satisfy the merchants and the public. He reformed several abuses, and occasioned the removal of some of the governors."

After his return from Africa I can find no record of his doings till the year 1769, when he was given command of the *Temeraire*, 74 guns, at Portsmouth; then in 1775 he had an extraordinary change of occupation, showing the versatility of his professional acquirements: he was appointed Colonel of Marines, and about the same time was elected M.P. for East Looe, Cornwall.

The outbreak of revolt in the American colonies caused the Government to commission an extra number of ships in 1776, and Graves was posted to the *Monmouth*, 64 guns, in which he had served as a junior lieutenant. A further augmentation of the fleet in 1778 was decided on when France made alliance with the revolted colonies, and Graves was promoted to the *Conqueror*, 74 guns, one of the fleet under the command of Byron ordered to North America to search for and engage the fleet of Louis XVI., which had sailed from France with the presumed intention of affording help to the American colonists. The French fleet was commanded by Count d'Estaing.

The English fleet was caught in a terrible gale and scattered, but the rear-admiral and five ships of the line, including Graves' ship, kept together and arrived at their destination at a critical moment, just in time to render much-needed support to the English squadron already on the station, which was far outnumbered by the French.

1779 saw Graves promoted Rear-Admiral of the Blue. He, of course, quitted the *Conqueror*, and was sent home in command of a convoy, which he brought to its destination without loss. The following summer Graves hoisted his flag on the *London*, 98 guns, and was despatched to America in command of a squadron of six ships of the line and one frigate. It was anticipated by the authorities that it would be a race to America between Graves and his old opponent, the Chevalier de Tiernay, who was on the way with ten sail of the line, besides frigates. On the journey Graves captured a valuable East Indian treasure-ship, and arrived, after a quick passage, without loss.

The French had, however, arrived first, and had taken refuge under Rhode Island, in a position in which it was impossible to attack them.

Graves was promoted Rear-Admiral of the Red on the 26th September, 1780. On the 8th March following the French put to sea, and on the 10th Admiral Arbuthnot, having received information, gave chase and came in sight of them on the 16th. An unimportant engagement took place, which, owing to the runaway tactics pursued by the French admiral, who persistently declined close action, had no decisive results. The following extracts from the log-book of the *London* are interesting :—

"16 March, 1781.—5.3 A.M., course south, wind W.S.W.; 6.2 A.M., the *Iris* made signal for 6 sail; . . . 7.30 A.M., a frigate in the N.W. made the signal for an enemy . . . at noon repeated the signal for the ships ahead to tack after the French fleet tacked; 1.6 P.M., the French fleet *bore away*; half-past, the *Robust*, in wearing to the same tack with the enemy, commenced the action; . . . at 2 P.M., directed our fire at her, which obliged her *to keep away for the centre of the fleet*, and they (French), making sail, *increased the distance*. . ."

Three ships of the English were more or less disabled,

two of which, the *Robust* and *Prudent*, were taken in tow. On the 17th the log-book states: "6 P.M., disabled ships in tow; 8 P.M., light airs, inclined to calm." The latter entries afford sufficient reason for losing touch of the French, who made all sail away.

Owing to the resignation of Admiral Arbuthnot shortly afterwards, the chief command in that quarter devolved on Admiral Graves. A very difficult task now had to be faced with very inadequate forces. The French fleet arrived on the American coast from the West Indies with the intention of joining forces with the Chevalier de Tiernay, and then sweeping the much inferior fleets of the English off the seas.

Rear-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, with fourteen ships, arrived at Sandy Hook on the 28th August, with the intelligence that the squadron from Rhode Island under Barras had been seen off capes of Virginia on their way to join the main fleet.

Graves immediately crossed the bar, and, taking command of the combined squadrons, sailed for the Chesapeake. The total force of ships of the line was nineteen, one 50-gun ship, and some frigates.

The course was S.W., with a N.N.E. wind in favour. The log-book of the *London*, the flag-ship, states:—

"September 5th. . . . 9.30 A.M., the *Solibay* made the signal for a fleet in the S.W.; . . . 10.30, made the signal to prepare for action; . . . 11, discovered a fleet of large ships at anchor near Cape Henry . . . made signal for the line-of-battle ahead; . . . 2 P.M., found the enemy's fleet to consist of 24 ships of the line and 2 frigates . . . line ahead; 2.4, preparatory signal to veer; 2.15, made signal and wore together: brought to in order to let the centre of enemy's ships come abreast of us; . . . 3 P.M., signal for van ships to keep to starboard; 3.27, signal for *the rear of the fleet to fill*; 3.30, made signal for *the ships astern to make more sail*; 3.34, signal . . . ships of the van . . . *more to starboard*. . . . The enemy's ships advancing very slow, and evening approaching, the admiral, judging this to be the moment of attack, made signal for the *ships to bear down and engage their opponents*, filled the main topsail, and bore down towards the enemy; 3 minutes afterwards *repeated it*; 4.11, hauled down the signal for the line-ahead, that it might not interfere with the signal to engage close; 4.15, the van and centre of our fleet commenced the action; 4.22, signal line-ahead ships not being sufficiently extended; 4.27, hauled down signal for line-ahead, and made signal

for close action; 5.20, repeated signal for close action; 5.30, our rear bore away; 6.30, the fire ceased on both sides."

The two fleets kept about three to four miles from each other during the night on the same tack. That night and the following day were employed in refitting, the French, meantime, *bearing away* from the British fleet, and at 8 A.M. on the 7th were "S.S.W. distant 4 leagues."

"8th September, 2.30 P.M.—*Solibay* hailed us to acquaint the admiral that the French fleet had just tacked, and the van of them bore south, and they appeared to be steering *from the wind*."

So they were, and so they continued until out of sight, and then bore up in the night and made for the Chesapeake again, where they took shelter.

In this battle the French had 24 ships, 1822 guns, and 18,200 men; the English had 19 ships, 1408 guns, and 11,300 men. The French were therefore superior by 5 ships, 414 guns, and 6889 men.

In the van and centre ships 336 men were killed and wounded, and 16 guns dismounted, but in the ships of the rear division not a rope was cut or a man touched. I think it is beyond dispute that if they had turned to starboard and borne down to engage at the same time Graves did, none of the French would have escaped.* Several of the leading ships were so damaged that the remainder had to stay by them, and one had to be destroyed. *La Gazette de France*, for 20 Nov. 1781, says—

"Les premiers vaisseaux de la ligne Française furent les seuls à prendre part à l'action : ils n'eurent aussi qu'au pareil nombre de vaisseaux à combattre : les cinq de l'arrière garde Angloise ayant refusé de se mettre à portée."

Graves returned to New York to refit, and when this was done he embarked Sir H. Clinton and his army, and sailed again in the hope of relieving Lord Cornwallis; but he had surrendered before the arrival of the Fleet.

Admiral Digby having arrived on appointment as successor

* This loss of opportunity was due to the 'Fighting Instructions' then in force. See p. 256.

to Arbuthnot, Graves sailed in the *London* for Jamaica, where he was ordered to join Sir Peter Parker.

During his temporary command, his fleet had captured fifteen ships of war, seven of which were taken into our Navy, and about 100 other prize ships.

Admiral Graves, on the 27th July, 1782, sailed for England with four ships of war and a convoy of 100 merchantmen, together with six French warships, prizes, including the *Ville de Paris*, 110 guns. Short of men and in bad condition, this fleet was quite unfit to outlive the equinoctial hurricanes encountered at this season in these regions. A history of the time states—

“The detail of circumstances attending this fleet is here given, because the subsequent fate and dreadful catastrophe befalling it was such as to call for some particular memorial: for the magnitude and extent of the shipwreck on this occasion by far exceeds that of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, or any other in the history of mankind, and at the same time the story will bear perpetual testimony to that extraordinary firmness of mind, coolness of temper, and possession of himself for which the Commander-in-Chief has ever been so remarkable in all trying moments of surprises, difficulty, and danger.”

Before long, two of the French prizes, owing to their condition and the weather, had to be sent to the nearest port. On the 16th September the log-book of the *Ramillies*, the flagship, begins to register “Hard gale;” on the 17th—

“At 3 P.M. the wind suddenly shifted to N.W., and blew with all violence; the sails being taken aback, carried away the mainmast, mizzenmast, and foretopmast, and broke the foreyard in the slings; the tiller was carried away at the same time. . . . Three feet of water in the hold, and the chain-pumps choked.”

The log goes on to describe the deplorable condition of the ships in sight, mostly mastless and at the mercy of the raging sea, and going down close by, all hands, and colours flying—

“18th, 8 A.M., 3 ft. 6 in. water;” “1 P.M., 4 ft. water;” “4 P.M., 4 ft. 6 in. water;” “19th, threw four guns overboard . . . the oakum working out of seams, and every part of the ship loosened;” “3.6 P.M., magazine full of water . . . 5 ft. water in hold.” “Threw more guns overboard, twelve from quarter-deck, and cut away the best and

small lower anchors." "20th, Cables overboard . . . threw the rest of the guns . . . the cutter, pinnace, powder, shot, and other heavy furniture ; noon, 5 ft. 10 in. water in hold ;" "21st, 6 in. water in hold . . . made signal for all boats . . . employed distributing people to the merchant vessels . . . could get at neither water nor provisions ;" 12th, "the admiral and 33 men went on board the *Belle*."

The last entry in the *Ramillies'* log-book is truly pathetic—

"22nd September, 1782.—At 2 P.M. His Majesty's ship *Ramillies* was set on fire and destroyed, after the people were distributed among the merchantmen."

Admiral Graves only left when there were 9 in. of water in the hold. After a stormy passage, in which the convoy was dispersed, the admiral arrived in Cork harbour on October 10th. He lost all his valuables, including charts and papers, plate, furniture, and uniform.

Peace having been declared, Admiral Graves had no special employment for some time, but in 1788 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief at Plymouth, and hoisted his flag on the *Impregnable*, 90 guns, and was promoted Vice-Admiral of the White on the 21st September, 1790.

When the possibility of war with Spain was anticipated, he shifted his flag to the *Cambridge*, and after three years' command at Plymouth, the French revolutionary Government having declared war in 1793, Admiral Graves was appointed second in command to Lord Howe in the Channel Fleet, and on the 12th April, 1794, was promoted Admiral of the Blue.

He took part, under Lord Howe, in the running actions on the 28th and 29th May, in which the French acted on their usual tactics of keeping away, so that it was impossible to bring on a general action. "General chase" was twice hoisted by Howe on the 29th. Admiral Graves' ship, the *Royal Sovereign*, had eight killed and twenty-two wounded, and had her rigging much cut about. No action took place on the 30th, owing to dense fog. The same weather obtained on the 31st, and the "bulk of the fleet having been separated from Lord Howe, Graves kept them well together until they

could rejoin the Earl." The same historian thus relates Graves' part in the battle of Ushant of the 1st June :—

" . . . When he perceived by the line of battle delivered out that his own ship, the *Royal Sovereign*, stood opposed to a ship of 74 guns, and that our *Marlborough*, 74 guns, was opposed to *Le Terrible*, of 110 guns, he, by signal, made the *Marlborough* change places with the *Sovereign* before the action began, and put himself against the first rate of the enemy. . . . The superiority of his fire was apparent after the second broadside, and he soon reduced *Le Terrible* to a mere wreck, with nothing more than her foremast standing, so that she must soon have been forced to strike, had not the French Commander-in-Chief, in *Le Montague*, come up, who engaged the *Royal Sovereign* for half an hour, and then bore away with the crippled French ships and protected their retreat. For a little time, indeed, the *Sovereign* was obliged to fire her guns on both sides, which is what rarely happens in any engagement ; and in this fight it fell also to the lot of the *Sovereign*, and of her alone, to engage two first rates of the enemy, commanded by their first and second admirals. . . . It must also be mentioned that, in token of approbation of the gallantry of Mr. Graves' conduct on this day, several of our ships took an opportunity, after the close of the action, to testify their sense of his behaviour in it by coming under the stern of the *Royal Sovereign* and cheering her for the exemplary part she had borne in the battle."

Admiral Graves was lying seriously wounded at the time.

The result of the battle was that the French admiral, Villaret, bore away, leaving no less than seven ships in the hands of the English fleet, one of which, the *Vengeur*, sank with 200 of her crew at 6 P.M. The English did not lose a ship, and the loss in killed and wounded on the seven captured ships (1470) was 332 more than the total English loss, which was 1148 ; including prisoners, the French loss was 7000. The strength of the fleets going into action was 26 line-of-battle ships each. English guns, 2174 ; French, 2214. Crews—English, 17,241 ; French, 19,989. Tonnage—English, 46,962 ; French, 52,010, besides which the French had one ship of 120 guns and three of 110, whereas Lord Howe's three largest ships were but 100 guns each.*

The French admiral, Kerquelen, says in his history :—

"The action began with great spirit on both sides. The English captains, more accustomed than ours to manage ships of war, cut

* See above, p. 201.

through our line in several places. . . . What is incomprehensible is our abandonment, on the field of battle, of six French ships, disabled but not subdued. . . . It is to be wished we could blot out this disgraceful event. . . . We proclaimed a victory after having lost seven fine ships that mounted over 500 pieces of cannon."

As a reward for his services, Admiral Graves was raised to the Peerage on the 12th August, 1794, as Lord Graves of Gravesend, Londonderry, and in making the announcement to Parliament the Prime Minister, Mr. Pitt, said that it was "as a testimony of His Majesty's approbation of the distinguished services which he performed in the naval engagements under Lord Howe in the summer of 1794."

On the 12th June following he was promoted Admiral of the White. His wound troubled him for some time, but he eventually recovered, but, owing to his great age, saw no further service, and, after sixty years' almost constant service, and in his seventy-sixth year, he died in 1801.

Lord Graves' life and work furnish us with examples of patience and courage seldom surpassed. Few men suffered so many trials and disappointments as he did. Few have shown such a versatile mastery of so many professional subjects, or were so widely accomplished. Daring to a degree, yet his courage was not that of rashness or fool-hardiness, nor was it that of the emotional impetuosity which sometimes wins a V.C. No ; it was the courage that comes on consideration—cool, calculating, and determined ; that sees odds, calculates them, faces them, goes through and overcomes them, and comes out triumphant.

He was not a popular idol. His was not a name to conjure with, but his was a life of devotion to admire and an example to follow.

XIII.

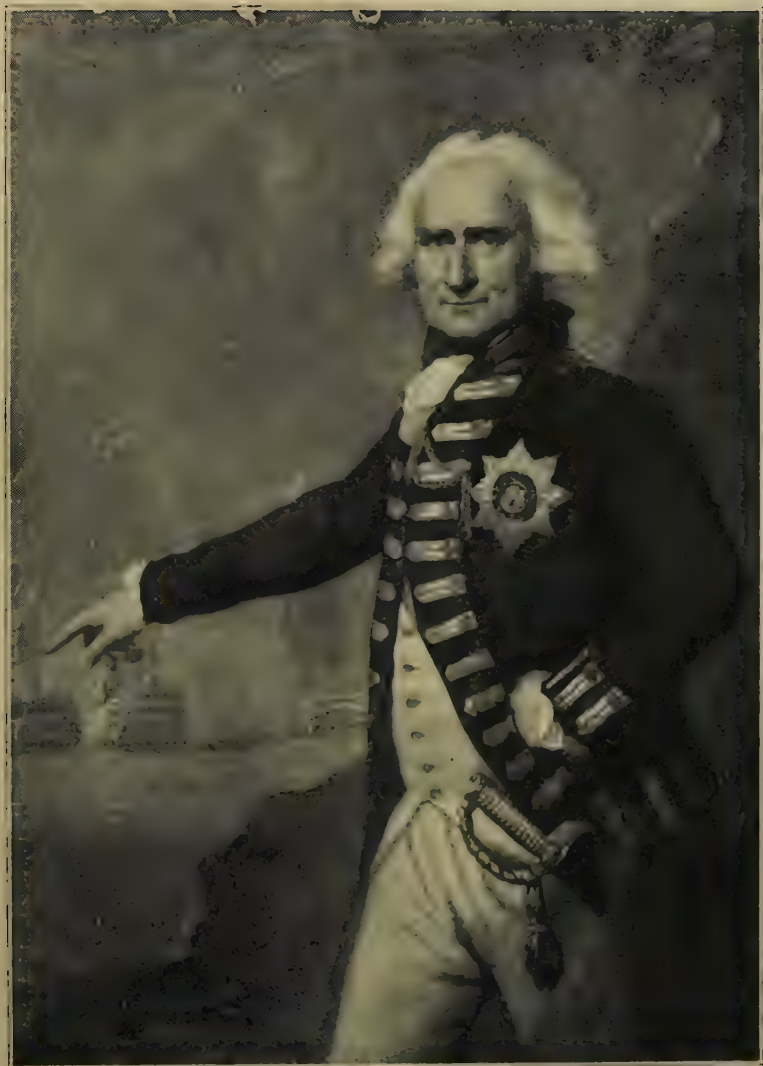
ADMIRAL ALEXANDER VISCOUNT BRIDPORT, K.B.

BY GENERAL VISCOUNT BRIDPORT, G.C.B., AND
HONOURABLE ALEXANDER NELSON HOOD.

AT the small village of Butleigh, by Glastonbury, which is situated on the hill dominating the Vale of Avalon in Somersetshire, stands the vicarage house where Alexander Hood (the subject of this memoir), and his equally famous brother, Samuel, were born ; the first on December 2nd, 1726, the other in 1724.

Samuel Hood, Doctor of Divinity, Vicar of Butleigh and Rector of Thorncombe in Dorsetshire (for he had the cure of souls of both parishes, in those days when a plurality of livings spoke as much to the merits of the incumbent as to the appreciation of them by his friends), the father of those two boys, was the younger son of Alexander Hood, Squire of Mosterton, a village in Dorsetshire, where, according to the parish registers, the family of Hoode (as it was then written) had been settled since the middle of the sixteenth century, and probably earlier.

Squire Alexander Hood of Mosterton, who, as his fathers before him, lived a retired country life, now has a claim to remembrance as the common ancestor of those several men, who lived, fought, and died in the service of their king and country. In his 'Annals of the Wars' (1862), Sir Edward Cust wrote on this subject: "The family of Hood appears to merit distinction above the many that have immortalized the annals of the British Navy, in that they have acquired five patents of the



Bridport

ADMIRAL ALEXANDER VISCOUNT BRIDPORT, K.B.

From an Engraving by V. Green of the Painting by F. L. Abbott.

peerage and include five heroes, all of whose names deserve admission into every naval biography, the descendants in two generations from one common grandfather . . ." The following is the list of ships captured by the Hoods, and the fleets under their command, 1782-1800: Captain Alexander Hood, 1 ship; Sir Samuel Hood, 7 ships; Lord Hood, 42 ships (including 33 forming the Toulon fleet); Lord Bridport, 4 ships; making in all 54 ships, carrying 2788 guns. "I know of no family," adds Sir E. Cust, "to compare with the Hoods in gallant deeds but that of the Dukes of Brunswick, sixteen of whom fell on the field of glory." *

Little is known of the boyhood of either of the two brothers, though, from the evidence offered by their lives and correspondence, they must have received the advantages of a liberal education. And what their calling in life would have been is also difficult to say. All that is known is, that the Navy as a profession was adopted owing to an accident—the word being read in a double sense—and had not that occurred the Hoods would not have gone to sea at all. The accident happened thus: A stranger, Thomas Smith, afterwards Vice-Admiral (who was known as "Tom of Ten Thousand"), was travelling to Plymouth. His carriage broke down as he passed through the village of Butleigh, and he became the unexpected guest at the vicarage. The morning of his departure, he gratefully said to his host: "Mr. Hood, you have two sons: would either of them like to go to sea with me?" The proposal was first made to the elder, Samuel, who refused; then to Alexander, who accepted it eagerly, and soon after joined Smith. On returning home some little time afterwards, his brother Samuel was so well pleased with Alexander's report, that he also entered the service; and thus it was that he (Samuel), though the elder brother, became the junior officer.

There is also little information to hand either of the opening years of Alexander Hood's career in the Navy; but his advance was rapid, whether owing to his own abilities, or to the happy auspices under which he joined the service; possibly to both. He became lieutenant on December 2nd, 1746, and

* 'Annals of the Wars' (1862), Sir E. Cust, vol. v. p. 287.

was appointed to the *Bridgewater*; he was 3rd lieutenant in the *Prince* in 1755; and in the following November had risen to be 1st lieutenant in the same ship. He was commander of the *Merlin* sloop in the next year; and two years later, captain both of the *St. George* and *Culloden*. In 1759 he was captain of the *Minerva* (32), which was originally captured from the French, and formed part of Sir Edward Hawke's fleet in the channel. In that ship Hood was in a series of engagements with the fleet of De Conflans, by which the proposed invasion of England was defeated, and was among the foremost to chase the flying ships of France, and to help to win the great victory in a furious storm.*

"An event soon afterwards happened which at once established his reputation, at least for consummate bravery. On January 23rd, 1761, at daybreak he fell in off Cape Pinas, with the *Warwick*, an English ship of the line, which had formerly fallen into the hands of the enemy, and now mounted 34 guns, and carried 300 men with reinforcements on board for the garrison of Pondicherry. Though it blew nearly a storm, and in spite of evident disparity of strength, Hood gave instant orders to chase; but such was the swell, that the *Minerva* was unable to come up with her antagonist till between nine and ten, when he engaged her with a fury of valour which the French were not backward in imitating."† . . . But we let Hood tell his own tale. "At eleven her (the *Warwick's*) main and fore-topmasts went away, and soon after she came on board us on the starboard bow, and then fell alongside; but the sea soon parted us, when the enemy fell astern. About a quarter after eleven the *Minerva's* bowsprit went away, and the foremast soon followed it. These were very unfortunate accidents, and I almost despaired of being able to attack the enemy again; however, I cut the wreck away as soon as possible, and, about one o'clock, cleared the ship of it with the loss of one man and the sheet anchor. I then wore the ship, and stood for the enemy, who was about three leagues to leeward of me. At four I came up close to the enemy, and renewed the attack.

* For the battle of Quiberon, see above, p. 137.

† Lodge's 'Portraits.'

About a quarter before five she struck, when I found she had fourteen killed, and thirty-two wounded. Our numbers are the boatswain and thirteen killed, and thirty-three wounded. . . . At nine o'clock the mainmast of the *Minerva* went away; at eleven the mizenmast followed it." *

Hood conveyed his hardly-won and shattered prize to Portsmouth, and on arriving there was presented to the king by Lord Anson, then First Lord of the Admiralty. He and his officers were further complimented with a place in the squadron sent to convey the future Queen Charlotte to England as soon as his ship had been repaired. He was appointed to command the *Africa*, a third-rate of 64 guns, in which he sailed to the Mediterranean, and in December, 1763, commanded the Royal yacht *Katherine*.

Hood was next afloat in the *Robust*, 74, sailing in June, 1778, under Sir Hugh Palliser in the third division of the great fleet commanded by Keppel. In the action off Ushant, on July 27th, Hood's ship had its full share of fighting, suffering severely, and receiving fourteen shots through her between wind and water, and losing in men, five killed and fourteen wounded.† He became so far mixed up in the feud engendered by party politics and professional jealousies, which was the outcome of that engagement, that he threw up his command in disgust and retired to the country. But he was not permitted to remain away long from the service, being recalled at the special request of Lord Howe to replace the unfortunate Admiral Kempenfeldt, who with his brave fellows went down in the *Royal George*.

On September 26th, 1780, he was appointed Rear-Admiral of the White on the same day as his brother became Rear-

* Official despatch to the Admiralty, dated February 5th, 1761.

† The action off Ushant was fought against the French fleet commanded by D'Orvilliers with loss of men on both sides, but indecisive result. The fleets were separated at nightfall by a squall of wind, and the French ships made for Brest during the night. Sir H. Palliser afterwards brought charges of incapacity against Keppel, and the court-martial which ensued was greatly a matter of party spirit, Palliser being favoured by the Government, Keppel by the Opposition. The court unanimously pronounced the charges malicious, and decided that Keppel had acted with bravery and judgment. A second court-martial acquitted Palliser of blame.

Admiral of the Blue ; and in the autumn of 1782 he hoisted his flag on board the *Queen*, 90 guns, to command the larboard squadron of the fleet sent under Lord Howe to relieve Gibraltar, then closely invested by land and sea by the French and Spaniards, and threatened by approaching famine and a bombardment by floating batteries. "With thirty-four sail of the line, besides frigates and fire-ships, troops and stores for the relief of the beleaguered fortress, this grand fleet set sail, only to learn on their voyage that its noble defender (Eliott) had been successful, the floating batteries burned or sunk, and the combined fleets of France and Spain only anxious to avoid the offer of battle which Howe made them. To Hood the landing of the troops and stores was confided ; and when the enemy had escaped down the Mediterranean, the fleet returned to Spithead and the Peace of Versailles followed." * At that time, had it not been for Hood's able conduct, the great mutiny in the fleet might have been anticipated by some years ; and mention of this is made later.

Hood was made a director and treasurer of Greenwich Hospital in 1766, and became Vice-Admiral of the White in 1787 ; and on May 7th, 1788, he was made a Knight of the Bath, the honorary distinction of Rear-Admiral of Great Britain being conferred upon him April 19th, 1790. He attained to the rank of Vice-Admiral of the Red on February 1st, 1793, and was made Vice-Admiral of Great Britain, April 6th, 1796.

War was again declared by the National Convention of France February 2nd, 1793, and the Channel fleet prepared to put to sea under the command of Lord Howe. Hood, who had been previously summoned to serve in Admiral Barrington's squadron, received command of one of its divisions, hoisting his flag on board the *Royal George*. The following account of the part that Hood took in the victory of the "Glorious First of June" may be given. "On May 29th, 1794, commenced that action which, while history shall couple with the name of Lord Howe, that of Sir Alexander Hood will also be remembered. In the heat of that day's contest, he so totally

* G. Lathom Browne's MSS.

disabled two of the enemy's ships, that they must have surrendered to him but for a movement of singular dexterity, by which the French admiral himself effected their rescue. The fleets now, owing to accidents of weather, remained in a menacing inactivity for two days, when, on the ever-memorable day, Lord Howe formed his line-of-battle at daybreak, and, having concluded his directions to his captains by enjoining each of them individually to use his utmost endeavours to break through the enemy's line, and then instantly to engage the ship nearest to him, at eight o'clock bore down on the French commander. The *Royal George* being in the rear, the day had somewhat advanced before she entered the battle. Her arrival, however, was presently signalled, for Sir Alexander seems to have been the first who successfully obeyed, and even more than obeyed, the admiral's gallant order by breaking through the French line and at once engaging both the ships by which, at the moment, he found himself assailed—the *Sanspareil*, of eighty guns, and the *Republican*, of one hundred and twenty. So furiously was this unequal contest carried on, that the former surrendered not till she had lost her fore and mizenmasts, and is said to have had more than two hundred and fifty men dead upon her decks; while the *Republican*, so shattered as to be wholly unable, even feebly, to maintain further the conflict, took advantage of the incapacity of pursuit under which her glorious adversary laboured, to quit it, though with much difficulty. The foremast, indeed, as well as the main and mizen topmasts of the *Royal George* had been shot away and her wheel rendered useless." * Hood's services were rewarded by an Irish peerage, conferring the title of Baron Bridport, and he also received the gold medal struck in commemoration of the battle.†

In the ensuing year Bridport was in command of a squadron of the Channel fleet, of which it was said the ships were more continuously at sea than heretofore; but he (as was Lord Howe, who retained the chief command) was apparently

* Lodge's 'Portraits.'

† For Lord Howe's despatch relating to this battle, see p. 201; see also p. 336.

hampered "by the Admiralty, who kept the fleet at Portsmouth, regardless of the disadvantages, only too obvious, of a position so far to the east of Brest." * Bridport's orders were to engage the French fleet then at anchor in that port, and to assist the French Royalists, who were up in arms in Brittany. He sailed from Spithead on June 12th, 1795, with fourteen sail of the line and frigates. The enemy left Brest the same day, the admiral receiving news of his appearance by a frigate, which had been sent to the Bay of Quiberon in order to convoy some of the Royalist leaders. Orders were given to chase; and early the next morning six British ships had gained so much on the enemy off the Ile de Groix, near Port L'Orient, that they were able to commence the fight, which soon after became general. The following account of the battle is extracted from the admiral's official letter:—"Dated *Royal George* at Sea, June 24th, 1795. It is with sincere satisfaction that I acquaint you . . . that His Majesty's squadron under my command attacked the enemy's fleet, consisting of twelve sail of the line, attended with eleven frigates and some smaller cruisers, on the 23rd instant, close on with the Port of L'Orient. The ships which struck were the *Alexandre*, *Le Formidable*, and *Le Tigre*, which were with difficulty retained. If the enemy had not been protected by the land, I have every reason to believe that a much greater number, if not all the line-of-battleships, would have been taken or destroyed. In detailing the particulars of this service, I am to state that at the dawn of day, on 22nd instant, the *Nymphé* and *Astræa*, being the look-out frigates, made the signal for the enemy's fleet. I soon perceived that there was no intention to meet me in battle; consequently I made the signal for four of the best sailing ships—the *Sanspareil*, *Orion*, *Rupert*, and *Colossus*, and soon afterwards for the whole fleet, to chase, which was continued all that day and during the night with very little wind. Early in the morning of the 23rd, the headmost ships—the *Irresistible*, *Orion*, *Queen Charlotte*, *Russell*, *Colossus*, and *Sanspareil*—were pretty well up with the enemy; and a little before six o'clock the action began and continued

* Captain Mahan, 'Influence of Sea Power,' etc., vol. i. p. 165.

till near nine. When the ships struck, the British squadron was near to some batteries and in the face of a strong naval port, which will manifest to the public the zeal, intrepidity, and skill of the admirals, captains, and all other officers, seamen, marines, and soldiers employed upon the service, and they are fully entitled to my warmest acknowledgments." The *Robust*, *Thunderer*, and *Standard* were far behind, and could not join the squadron until the action was over.

The account of the engagement, written by an officer serving on board the *Russell*, may further be quoted, in order to show that, had it not been for the protection afforded by the shore batteries, the victory would have been more complete, indeed one of the most signal in our naval history. "The enemy were right ahead of us, but the wind shifting in their favour brought them on our weather bow. . . . At four we discovered the *Ile de Groix* upon our lee-bow; by six *Orion* and *Irresistible* came up with the *Alexandre* and began to engage. A short time after the *Queen Charlotte* got up; when her gallant commander instantly poured a tremendous and well-directed fire on both sides. The *Russell* at a quarter past six was also pretty well up, but did not fire until she got abreast of the *Queen Charlotte* to windward of her, when she opened a most splendid broadside. The *Russell*, as she passed, engaged several ships that were together, especially the *Alexandre*, who was to leeward. In about a quarter of an hour one of the ships, which the *Russell* engaged, took fire on the poop; and in a short time her mizenmast went overboard, and she then bore up and struck. This was the *Formidable*, 74. The *Sanspareil* and *Colossus* had now been in action twenty minutes. After the *Formidable* had struck, the smoke cleared up to leeward, and we perceived the *Alexandre* had also struck. . . . By this time we had got some distance into the bay. . . . The *Royal George* (Flagship) had got clear up alongside the *Tigre*, and having engaged her about three minutes she bore up and struck. Lord Bridport then advanced with his usual spirit and engaged again, firing at the *Nereid*, three-decker, and keeping up a heavy fire on both sides. We were also at this time engaged again, when the

Admiral, not thinking it prudent to advance further into the bay, as the enemy had already opened a battery on us from the shore, bore up. . . . At nine o'clock the firing ceased on both sides. . . . The *Tigre* had three hundred men killed and wounded, and the others suffered in proportion. The remainder of the enemy's fleet escaped into L'Orient. On July 14th our prizes, *Tigre*, *Alexandre*, and *Formidable*, arrived at Plymouth."

For this victory Bridport received a step in the peerage. The freedom of the City of London was conferred upon him in a gold casket bearing on the lid a medallion of the *Royal George* with the words, "Glorious 23rd June, 1795," and inside the inscription, "In testimony of the grateful sense this Court entertains of the signal and important victory obtained by his Majesty's Fleet under his Lordship's command over the French fleet upon the coast of France on the 23rd of June last." A commemorative medal was also struck; on one side being the head of Lord Bridport, and on the other side a figure of Victory holding the flags of the captured ships in the right hand, and in the left hand a naval crown; in the margin are the words, "Off Port L'Orient and close to the French shore and batteries with 22 ships attacked and defeated the French fleet of 32 ships. Three ships and 228 guns taken." On his return to Spithead, Bridport was annoyed at the chief command being reserved by Lord Howe, who was unfit for active service, and his independence of character showed itself in the following correspondence, which may be briefly quoted as an example of it. Lord Spencer, then First Lord of the Admiralty, had written that, owing to Howe being unable to go to sea, Bridport was to have, meanwhile, a separate command "in testimony of approbation of his late service," but that was not to interfere with Howe's supreme command on restoration to health.* This communication, and the fact of being further put aside later on, drew from Bridport the following characteristic answer: "With respect to myself I shall be ready to serve the king as long as my health and faculties will allow; when they shall require me to return to a private

* Letter of Lord Spencer of July 31st, 1795.

station, I will give your Lordship no trouble, but solicit his Majesty's permission to retire from his service, as under such circumstances I will never receive the public money, or take the rewards of other men's labours." Again, on receiving from the Secretary of the Admiralty instructions as to what was to happen in the event of his death, which were to empower Rear-Admiral Pole to hoist his flag on board the *Royal George*, a curious and indelicate thing to do, Bridport dryly replied: "I lost no time in delivering the order to Rear-Admiral Pole, but I fairly confess your letter and the order caused much surprise, as it appeared unprecedented and certainly unnecessary. I have long known that Rear-Admiral Pole has felt some scruples in his present situation as my first captain. . . . With respect to removing his scruples I cannot see that this means of precaution will fully answer his expectations. Indeed I am clearly of opinion their Lordships had better have given him an order to hoist his flag in the line . . . I submit it to their Lordships whether such appointment could not more effectually remove the Rear-Admiral's scruples and coincide with his feelings, and thereby give me a possible opportunity of seeing his flag hoisted and not wait for the event of my death before he commands a division in the Channel Fleet."

Bridport soon succeeded to the chief command at Spithead, where the head-quarters of the Channel Fleet were. It is well to recall the fact that not a hundred years have elapsed since our coasts were the object of invasion to the great consternation of the inhabitants. And we may be permitted a digression in order to point out how a mistaken policy at the Admiralty helped the adversary and interfered with meeting the French, for it was not Bridport's fault that the enemy's large fleet, with 16,000 men on board, which left Brest December 16th, 1796, for Bantry Bay, was not met or brought to battle. The British Admirals, on whom Bridport relied for information, had thought it right to quit the blockading ground, and the Frenchmen thus evaded observation and sailed. It was fortunate that the elements came to the rescue and fought in our favour, for at that moment "not a single gun

was mounted within many miles of Bantry, and no troops were nearer than Cork." A heavy storm broke up the French fleet on leaving Brest; and a heavier one drove it from the Irish shores, so that Bridport, on receiving at Portsmouth the news of the enemy's sailing, was too late to come up, he having sailed direct for Ireland. Mahan thus condemns the policy of keeping the Channel fleet at Portsmouth: * "The newly adopted system of telegraphing unfortunately confirmed the tendency of the Admiralty to keep the Channel fleet at the latter point, regardless of the obvious but unappreciated strategic disadvantage of a position so far east of Brest with wind prevailing from western quarters. To have the commander-in-chief just there under their own hand to receive orders from them, seemed much safer than to put him and his fleet in a central position, whence he could more certainly intercept or most rapidly follow the enemy, and than to trust to the judgment of a trained and competent sea officer to act as the emergency required. The plan came near to resulting very disastrously. How could they in London judge better than a good admiral on the coast?" Writing on the same subject, Osler, in his *Life of Exmouth*, says, "If Lord Bridport had been waiting at Falmouth with discretionary powers, Pellew having been instructed to communicate directly with him, he might have sailed early on December 21st, and found the enemy in Bantry Bay, when, perhaps, not a ship would have escaped him." Alison, on the subject of unpreparedness, may be also quoted as giving a lesson not to be despised: "The result of the French expedition was pregnant with important instructions to the English, as demonstrating that the empire of the seas does not always afford security against invasion; for that in face of superior maritime force, her (England's) shores had been for sixteen days at the mercy of an enemy, and that it was only the merciful assistance of the elements, and not the skill of her sailors or the valour of her armies

* For this grave error, while he considers that blame attaches to Howe and Bridport (whom he contrasts in this matter with St. Vincent), Captain Mahan regards the Admiralty as ultimately responsible (*'Influence of Sea Power,'* i. 345, 346).

that had saved them from the most serious dangers at a moment when her existence in a powerful independence was so necessary to the world."

Among the Bridport papers are some secret despatches and instructions captured from the French, showing how greatly the enemy relied on the invasion of Ireland, and in stirring up the people to revolt. The several expeditions, which were planned with immense care, bear testimony to the weak spot in Great Britain's armour; and it was chiefly by mismanagement that the one under General Humbert, which landed in Killala Bay, in 1798, and which was master of the situation for a full fortnight, did not prove a serious incident in the war to our detriment.

The episode of the mutiny at St. Helen's may here be alluded to. The spark of discontent had long been smouldering among British seamen; and it was kept under with difficulty at the return of the ships sent to relieve Gibraltar, in 1782. It was probably a difficult work to pay off such a fleet; but the proceedings were carried out in so dilatory a manner by the authorities that serious complaints arose. Hood was brought back from the country to calm the irritated minds of the men. He succeeded, but with great difficulty. His correspondence with Lord Howe at that period, reporting the success of his efforts, points out some of the causes of discontent; and though severely reprobating the action taken by the crews, he shows that there was good reason for complaint. That was in 1783. The spark broke into the flame of open insubordination in 1797, when on April 15th, Bridport, by command of the Admiralty, which was aware of the prevailing feeling and hoped thereby to quell it, "threw out a signal from the flagship to prepare for sea, when instead of weighing anchor the crew of the *Queen Charlotte* ran up the shrouds and gave three cheers; this was speedily answered in the same way from the other ships of the fleet and an open mutiny was declared." * Matters became serious, and the members of the Board of Admiralty went down to Portsmouth and entered into direct communication with the mutineers. On April 20th

* Sir E. Cust, 'Annals of the Wars.'

a letter was sent to the seamen through Bridport, agreeing to their demands if the men would return to their duty. "The reply was not deemed satisfactory, and on measures being taken against one of the delegates, the mutineers hoisted the red flag on board the *Royal George*, which the officers hauled down. On the following day, the ships' crews directed two letters to be written, one to the lords of the admiralty, and another to Lord Bridport, in which they styled him their father and friend, and assured him of their respect and attachment. He returned to the ship and his flag was re-hoisted. After a short and pathetic address to the crew, he informed them that he had brought with him a redress of their grievances and the King's pardon for what had passed. These offers were accepted and every man returned to his duty. "The fleet remained in due subordination till May 7th, when a second signal to repair to sea was again disregarded. On May 14th, Lord Howe, whose influence in the navy might naturally be supposed to be greater than that of any other person at this period, went down with plenary powers to settle the dispute.* Affairs were amicably adjusted by him on 15th, and on 16th, Lord Bridport with the fleet amounting to fifteen sail of the line, got under way, and went to sea." †

The Admiral's energies were now mainly employed in watching the enemy. On April 25th, 1799, he saw that the French fleet was in Brest. As the wind was fresh from N.E. he was compelled to stand out until he reached twelve miles W.S.W. off Ushant. The necessity of seeking a safe anchorage allowed the enemy to slip out. On receiving intelligence that the fleet had sailed, Bridport made for Brest, to be sure of the fact; and, well aware of the prior designs of the French, apparently confirmed by the capture of a ship with—as was afterwards proved—false despatches, and thinking Ireland was again the object of the expedition, proceeded there with all despatch. He sent to warn both Lords Keith and St. Vincent, the former being off Cadiz, and the latter at Gibraltar; and he ordered all available ships in the Channel to join him. With this augmentation of force he sent off sixteen ships to the

* See above, p. 213.

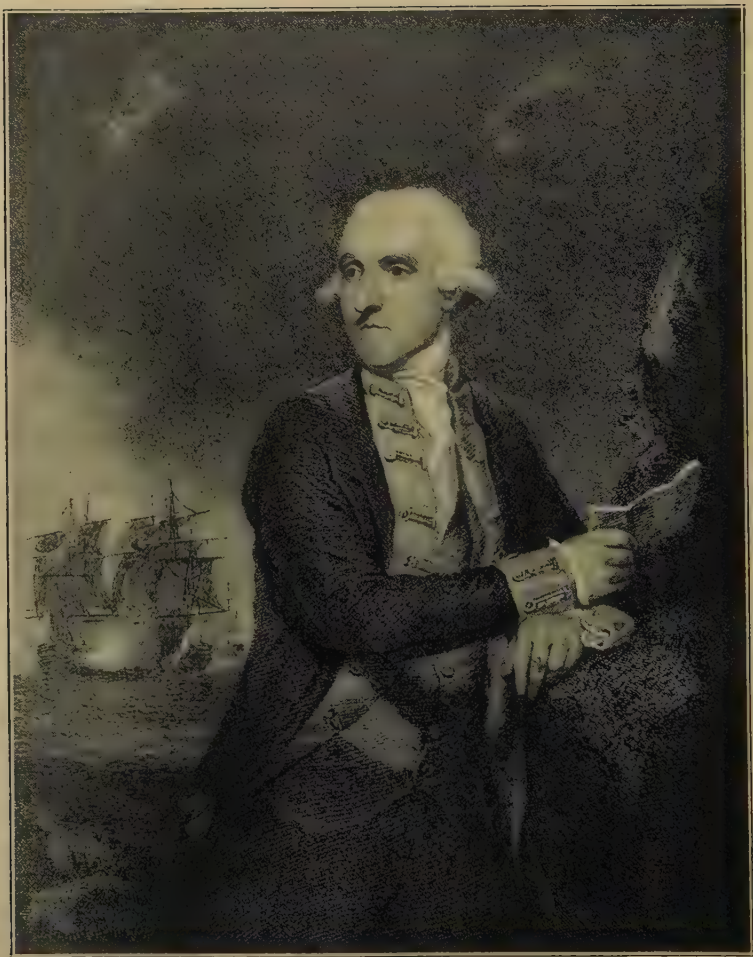
† Cust's 'Annals of the Wars,' vol. v. p. 97.

Mediterranean and diligently sought for the enemy. But Ireland was not, and the Mediterranean was, the destination of the French, who reached Toulon, May 18th, narrowly escaping St. Vincent in a gale of wind which drove them through the Straits of Gibraltar to Toulon.

This was near the close of Bridport's active service of sixty-four years' duration, for on April 8th, 1800, he was granted conditional leave of absence, and received orders to strike his flag 22nd of that month. In 1800 he was made a General of Marines; and in the following year received the honour of another step in the peerage. He was one of the official pall-bearers at Nelson's funeral at St. Paul's. He served in the House of Commons for several years as member for Bridgwater and Buckingham. He was twice married, first to Mary, daughter of Prebendary West, of Durham; and second, to Mary Sophia, only daughter and heiress of Thomas Bray, of Edmonton. Some words as to his private character, written by one who knew him well, may close this memoir: "If I were required to give the character of Lord Bridport in the most concise form possible, I should do it in one word, which he adopted for his motto 'Steady,' which applies with equal felicity as a nautical term to his professional career, and in its moral sense to the qualities of his mind. 'Sir, be steady in all your resolves,' was his frequent admonition to the young men under his command, and it was exemplified in his public and private character. He was a warm politician, and the hereditary friend of the family of Pitt; yet I doubt whether a single instance could be adduced of his having directed his patronage to a political or electioneering purpose. He had an air of the highest distinction; and the dignity of his manners, added to a love of discipline, founded on his thorough knowledge of the service, tended to keep young men at a considerable distance, yet his heart was extremely tender, and in all respects his kindness was even parental. Many a sick youngster has been sent to re-establish his health at the Admiral's country house. His solicitude to mitigate the anxiety of parted friends and relations by the prompt distribution of letters in the fleet is gratefully recorded in the

correspondence of Lord Collingwood. 'Live for the living,' was one of his maxims, which, like all his maxims, he exemplified in practice. He lived before the most sacred and secret feelings of private devotion had become a flippant topic of ordinary gossip, but in the public duties of religion he was punctual and reverent."

Lord Bridport died May 3rd, 1814, in the 87th year of his age, two years before his brother Samuel, Lord Hood, to whom he was devotedly attached. He lies buried at Cricket St. Thomas.



Hood

SAMUEL, ADMIRAL VISCOUNT HOOD.

From the Original of Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

XIV.

SAMUEL, ADMIRAL VISCOUNT HOOD.

BY GENERAL VISCOUNT BRIDPORT, G.C.B., AND
HONOURABLE ALEXANDER NELSON HOOD.

SAMUEL HOOD was the eldest son of the Rev. Samuel Hood, D.D., Vicar of Butleigh, in Somersetshire, and Thorncombe, in Dorsetshire, Prebendary of Wells, by Mary, daughter of Richard Hoskyns, of Beaminster. Born at Butleigh on the 12th December, 1724, he like his brother Alexander (afterwards Lord Bridport), adopted the sea for a profession by a mischance, which has been already related in the memoirs of his brother.* Samuel Hood joined the Navy on the 6th May, 1741, the year in which the war about the Austrian Succession began. He was first in the *Romney*, under Captain Thomas Smith; in 1743 he served on board the *Garland*, with Captain Thomas Grenville. Being rated as a midshipman, when discharged to the *Sheerness*, under Captain Rodney, he went with him to the *Ludlow Castle*. "He left her on the 23rd January, 1745-6, served for a few months in the *Exeter*, again under Smith, at this time commodore and commander-in-chief on the coast of Scotland, and was appointed by him acting-lieutenant of the *Winchelsea*, of 20 guns, commanded by Captain Henry Dyve, on whose recommendation the commission was confirmed on the 17th June, 1746. The *Winchelsea* continued to be actively employed on the coast of Scotland, in the North Sea, and in the Channel. On the 19th November, 1746, while cruising

* See above, p. 232.

off Scilly in company with the *Portland*, they fell in with the French frigate *Subtile*, of 26 guns. In the chase the *Portland* was lost sight of, and a severe action between the two frigates ensued, in the course of which Hood was wounded in the hand. On the *Portland* coming up the *Subtile* surrendered, and was added to the English Navy as the *Amazon*.* That was Hood's baptism of fire, and the commencement of a career of fighting which lasted over fifty years.

Hood then served in the *Greenwich* and in the *Lyon*, sailing in the latter to the North American station under the flag of Rear-Admiral Watson. He was placed on half-pay on his return to England in November, 1748. The war had been terminated in that year by the Peace of Aix la Chapelle. In January, 1753, he was appointed to the *Invincible*, guard-ship at Portsmouth, and soon afterwards to the *Terrible*. In 1754 he went out again to North America, in command of the *Jamaica*, sloop, and there had an opportunity of showing that he was not afraid of responsibility. Having joined Keppel at Hampton Roads, Virginia, at the time of General Braddock's defeat, he did excellent service "on the outbreak of putrid fever in Boscawen's fleet—the admiral being ill—by entering all the supernumeraries he could and bringing them to that fleet." In 1756 Hood was posted to the *Lively*. But as Commodore Holmes appointed him his captain in the *Grafton*, he returned to England at the end of the year in that ship, after having had a share in that officer's action off Louisbourg, in which he was favourably mentioned in despatches.

Meantime, in 1755, war with France had again broken out, in consequence of the rivalry between the two countries, both in North America and in the East Indies; and in the following year England became the ally of Prussia against France in the Seven Years' War.

"Being in no ways inclined to be idle ashore while anything can be got to employ me," as he wrote to his friend, Lord Temple, he offered his services to take the place of any

* 'Dictionary of National Biography.'

captain who might be temporarily employed on Admiral Byng's court-martial. He therefore replaced Captain Keppel in the *Torbay*; then went to the *Tartar*; and similarly, on the 30th April, 1757, to the *Antelope* (50), which was starting on a cruise, and in which he fought his first conspicuous action, against the *Aquilon*, off the French coast. Hood describes the engagement thus: "On the 13th of May, 1757, in latitude 47 degrees 30 minutes, I saw three sail to windward, and gave chase to them. At noon they brought to, and hoisted French colours, and made signals to one another. About one o'clock the largest ship hoisted a pendant, and fired a gun to leeward, and about half an hour after fired another, which, not being answered, she fired two shots, hauled her mainsail up, took in her top-gallant sails, and bore directly down, being then two miles off. Upon which I hoisted my proper colours, and shortened sail to my foresail and topsails, expecting to be attacked; but, in a few minutes after, she hauled up and made all sail she could. The other two—one a frigate-like ship, the other a snow—continued before the wind. I pursued the warlike ship as fast as possible, and before four was within point-blank shot of her. About twenty minutes after we brought our broadside to bear, and were very close, and kept a continued fire upon her till forty minutes after five, when we had the breakers so near upon our lee that we could not wear, and had hardly room to stay clear of the enemy. But she came about, and while in stays the French ship struck upon the rocks and lost her mizenmast. I stood off for near an hour to put the ship in a workable state; then stood in again with an intention to run as close to the enemy as possible, in order to destroy her; but I found that business, to all appearance, done, as she had beat over a ridge of rocks, which were too far without her for me to do her further injury. Where the French ship is, is the north part of Audierne Bay. I had three men killed and thirteen wounded, and was much shattered in my rigging and sails, the mizenmast shot through. On the 24th I took a small 'snow,' from Bordeaux to Canada with wine, brandy, and flour; and the next day a small privateer, of 6 guns, 10

swivels, and 50 men, that came out of Port Louis the evening before: that was the 'snow' in company with the man-of-war the day I drove her on shore. Captain and officers give the following account of her (the man-of-war). She was called the *Aquilon*, mounting 48 guns, but pierced for 56, had on board 480 men, 30 of whom were killed and 25 wounded; in the latter was the captain; that the rocks were through her bottom in several places; and that she was irrevocably lost." *

The thanks and approval of the Lords of the Admiralty were conveyed to Hood for that action, and they also intimated to him that he would shortly have the command of a ship of his own.† On the 14th July, 1757, he was appointed to the *Bideford* frigate, under Sir Edward Hawke; and on the 7th February, 1758, to the *Vestal* (32), joining her, and being with Hawke when he went again to Basque Roads, and destroyed the fortifications of the Ile d'Aix.‡ After cruising continuously off the Irish and French coasts, on the 12th February, 1759, the *Vestal* sailed with Holmes's squadron for North America; but an action more brilliant than the one already related sent Hood back to Spithead to refit.

A small detachment of French ships, among them the *Bellona*, of 32 guns and 220 men, commanded by the Comte de Beauhonnor, and carrying despatches for the French Court, was chased on leaving Martinique by ships forming part of Commodore Moore's squadron. The *Bellona* managed to escape, owing to her fast sailing properties. On the 21st February the *Vestal*, being stationed to look out ahead, espied the *Bellona*, with which Hood was enabled to close after an exciting chase of several hours. A desperate engagement commenced at 2 P.M., and continued at close quarters until six o'clock, when the enemy struck her colours and surrendered. The *Bellona* was reduced to a crippled condition, with only the foremast standing, and that without either yard or topmast.

* Official letter.

† Letter of the Secretary of the Admiralty, the 3rd June, 1757.

‡ See above, p. 134.

On Hood sending a lieutenant on board to take possession of the prize, he found over thirty men dead upon her decks, and forty-two wounded ; and the prisoners acknowledged that they had thrown some ten or twelve more overboard. The *Vestal* suffered scarcely less severely ; all her topmasts were carried away, and the lower masts were so injured that had not the weather been fine they must have gone too. Hood was again comparatively fortunate in saving his men, the casualties being five killed, or one-sixth of the enemy's loss, and twenty-two wounded. The prize was jury-rigged and taken to Spithead ; and she was afterwards known in the English Navy as the *Repulse*.

An example of the indomitable spirit that animated the highest to the lowest in the service in those times, especially those engaged in the incomparable actions between single ships, which are alike the glory of the country as they were the terror of its enemies, may be quoted. A midshipman of the *Vestal* was lying mortally wounded below, when, hearing that the enemy had struck her colours, he raised himself with difficulty on his elbow, and, calling for and giving three cheers, he expired, victory being accounted by the boy of more consequence than death.

The *Vestal* being refitted, she joined Rodney's squadron in its expedition against Havre de Grace, where formidable preparation was in progress for the invasion of England.* Hood assisted in the signal service of dispersing and nearly destroying the whole of the armament of flat-bottomed boats, together with the stores and the town of Harfleur, where they were deposited. So great was the apprehension of invasion in England, that a large force was kept cruising in the Channel ; and there Hood remained until the following spring, "when, at his own special request, he was sent to the Mediterranean. 'For ten years past,' he wrote, on the 30th April, 1760, 'I have been afflicted with a bilious disorder, which has been so very severe within these nine months as to confine me to my cabin for many days together.' A milder climate might, he thought, give him relief."† Hood

* See p. 136.

† 'Dictionary of National Biography.'

passed the next three years in the Mediterranean, returning home and paying off in April, 1763, a few weeks after the Peace of Paris was signed, which left England the gainer by Canada, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, and some West Indian islands, not to speak of the substitution of English for French influence in India. Appointed to the *Thunderer*, guardship at Portsmouth, in September of that year, he took some troops to North America in 1765. He hoisted his broad pennant on board the *Romney* as commander-in-chief in North America. On returning to England, he commanded the *Royal William* at Portsmouth from January, 1771, to November, 1773, being transferred to the *Marlborough* in July, 1776, and then to the *Couragux*.

In January, 1778, Hood was made Governor of the Naval Academy and Commissioner of the Navy at Portsmouth; and on the occasion of the king's visit to that town in the following May the honour of a baronetcy was conferred upon him. In the position of Commissioner, Hood was necessarily brought into relations with the king during his frequent visits to the dockyard. On the king's recognition of Hood's merits, which later on determined him to send his son, Prince (afterwards King) William, to sea under his charge, and on the great personal interest in the working and supervision of the navy, which the king manifested, we quote some letters from among the family papers. Writing from Kew on the 27th May, 1779, the king said: "I hope the change of the Master-Shipwrights will greatly advance the business of the yard; my attachment to Portsmouth is too well known for you to doubt my desire of having every branch filled there with at least as able heads as those in any other; indeed, your activity deserves every assistance that can alone be obtained by having proper inferiors."* The king wrote again on the 30th November of the same year from the Queen's House, Windsor: "I trust with the change of Master-Shipwrights and the two fresh assistants, that the business of your yard is carried on with more spirit; indeed, your own activity is so great that it is not necessary to point out that every exertion

* Autograph letter of King George III. to Sir Samuel Hood.

is necessary. The ships will now in succession come into dock to be cleaned and sheathed with copper; do not let an hour be lost, and let the shipwrights show they can sheath this winter in as few hours as they did the *Fox* the day before I last left Portsmouth." Another letter says: "I cannot conclude without expressing my approbation of the activity with which you forward the business of the dockyard, and the comfort I feel at so many ships having by this time left Spithead." *

The king's commands to Hood on the subject of Prince William's naval career are also interesting, as showing that the king was resolved that the prince should make his way in the service on his own merits, without favour, and on an equality with others. The king wrote:

"Kew, June 11th, 1779.

"SIR SAMUEL HOOD,—This will be delivered to you by Mr. Majendie, who is to attend my son on board the *Prince George* to pursue his classical studies; the young midshipman will be at the dockyard between one and two on Monday; I desire that he may be received without the smallest marks of parade; I trust the Admiral will order him immediately on board. I know I need not recommend Major-General de Budé to you, for, whoever is known to belong to me, ever meets with attention when within your walls. The young man goes as a sailor, and as such, I add again, no marks of distinction are to be shown him; they would destroy my whole plan.

"GEORGE R.

"To Sir Samuel Hood." †

One later letter of the king may be quoted as showing what his opinion of Hood was:—

"Windsor, August, 1782.

"Lord Hood must feel as strongly as I can the misfortune it would be for my third son to remain on shore the next winter when most probably there will be active service in the West Indies. Rear-Admiral Digby not being able to go

* Autograph letter of King George III. to Sir Samuel Hood. † Ibid.

there, I cannot choose to place William under the direction of any one but the person to whom this letter is addressed, of whose attachment to my person, as well as skill in his profession, I have every reason to be satisfied. I have therefore directed Rear-Admiral Digby that he may be placed on board the *Barfleur*, and trust that that admiral will fully communicate to Lord Hood the manner in which I have as yet thought it best to have my son treated. I rely the more on its being followed, as I remember Lord Hood very much encouraged my ideas on that head when I spoke to him upon the subject at Portsmouth. I shall be happy if William can be witness to as brilliant actions as have attended the *Barfleur* ever since she left this Island.

“GEORGE R.” *

Prince William, as will be seen hereafter, sailed with Hood in the *Barfleur* in October, 1782, for the West Indies; and from his letters he appears to have looked upon the admiral as his professional instructor and personal friend. It was in the West Indies that the friendship between Prince William and Nelson began; for though Nelson was not yet “the great little man of whom every one was afraid,” so high was Hood’s opinion of him that he sent Prince William to that “young captain, who had never been in a fleet action, for instruction in tactics,” † Hood thinking Nelson, though only twenty-four years of age, the most original tactician of the day, and that he knew as much about naval tactics as any officer in the fleet.

On the 26th September, 1780, Hood became Rear-Admiral of the Blue on the same day as his brother Alexander was promoted Rear-Admiral of the White. He hoisted his flag on board the *Barfleur*, and in December he took command of a strong squadron sent to the West Indies to strengthen Rodney’s fleet. ‡ He joined that commander, who welcomed him with a cordial and flattering letter, § in the bloodless

* Autograph letter of King George III. to Sir Samuel Hood.

† Beresford, ‘Nelson and his Times.’

‡ See p. 168.

§ Letter of Sir George Rodney to Sir Samuel Hood, 4th January, 1781.

enterprise against the Dutch island of St. Eustatius. He was despatched before the main body of the fleet to invest the bay and prevent the escape of any of the enemy's ships—a service which, as is remarked in the official despatches, he effectively performed. The island was the most valuable of all the Dutch possessions in the West Indies, on account of being a general depôt of merchandise in those seas. So great was the commerce of it, that it is said the bulkier bales of goods had to remain out-of-doors for want of room in the warehouses. The plunder was therefore immense, and the prize-money proportionately considerable.

Hood was afterwards ordered by Rodney to blockade Martinique ; and though he strongly represented the undesirability of the expedition—the Comte de Grasse being on his way with a large fleet—Rodney insisted on the attempt being made. Hood's prevision proved correct. When, as was foreseen by him, the French fleet appeared on the 28th April, Hood, with only eighteen ships, nevertheless “instantly determined to engage it, and at ten in the morning formed his line of battle ahead. At noon he received the intelligence of their great superiority from his reconnoitring frigate, the only one which he had for that or any other service. In the morning he made the signal for a close line and to prepare for action, and the enemy formed their line of battle. Hood, in his account to the commander-in-chief, wrote—‘At half-past twelve the French admiral began to fire on the *Barfleur*, which was immediately returned, and the action became general, but at too great a distance ; and I believe never was more powder and shot thrown away in one day before ; but it was with Monsieur de Grasse the option of distance lay. It was not possible for me to go nearer.’ Hood, believing that the French meant to engage on the following morning, by a masterly manœuvre made a sudden and final effort to gain the wind, which would have enabled him to have cut to pieces one-half of the enemy's fleet before the other could have come up to its assistance, but fortune failed him in this attempt.” *

* Lodge's ‘Portraits.’

other for two more days, "when De Grasse, who was as timid a tactician as he showed himself bold as a strategist, retired into Fort Royal, leaving the way clear for Hood to join Rodney." *

On Rodney sailing for England, Hood was left in command, with orders to reinforce Rear-Admiral Graves (senior officer) on the North-American coast. "On 5th September, having joined forces, the English fleet found itself off the Chesapeake opposed to a French fleet of twenty-four, with four remaining inside to continue the blockade, and seven more on their way to Rhode Island. In the battle, which followed, Hood commanded the rear of the English line and never got into action, the stress of the fighting falling entirely on the van, which was roughly handled." † The fault that the battle was not more decisive was not to be attributed to Graves or to those under him, but rather, as Professor Laughton remarks in the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' to the Fighting Instructions "which prescribed, under pain of cashiering or death, the preserving the line and engaging from van to rear. The fatal effects of this Instruction thus brought home to Hood's mind, probably led to the tactical changes, which he largely assisted in developing." ‡

On the fleet returning to Sandy Hook, Hood sailed for the West Indies again. He was at Barbadoes on December 5th. In relating at some length Hood's engagement with De Grasse, at St. Christopher's, or St. Kitt's, in the hope of saving that island, we do so, not only to speak of him as a tactician and strategist, but also because it is allowed that the greatest sea-fight in our history, if judged by the loss inflicted on the enemy's ships, and the immediate result of the fighting—the Battle of the Nile—was partly fought on lines laid down by Hood at St. Kitt's. "It will be instructive to a professional reader," says Captain Mahan, "to compare the disposition of Admiral Brueys, in Aboukir Bay, with those adopted by Lord Hood in 1782 at St. Kitt's Island, when expecting an attack at anchor from a very superior force. The comparison is historically interesting as well as instructive, for it has been

* 'Dictionary of National Biography.'

† Ibid.

‡ See above, p. 227.

said that Nelson framed his own plan, in the cogitations of his long chase, upon Hood's scheme for attacking the French fleet under Admiral de Grasse, while lying at anchorage, from which he first drove it, before occupying it himself. The parallel is quite complete, for neither at St. Kitt's nor Aboukir was the anchored fleet able to get substantial assistance from the batteries. The decisively important points in such a disposition, as in any order of battle, land or sea, are—(1) that the line cannot be pierced, and (2) that the flanks cannot be turned. Hood thrust one flank ship so close to the shore that the enemy could not pass round her, and closed up his intervals. Brueys left the same flank—for in both cases it was the van and weather ship—open to turning, with long spaces between the vessels. In his arrangement for the other flank, for the lee ships, Brueys was equally inferior. Hood threw his right lee ships at right angles to the rest of the fleet, so that their broadsides completely protected the latter from enfilading fire. Brueys simply bent his line a little with a view of approaching the rear to shoal water. Failing thus to obtain a fire at right angles to the principal line of battle, the rear did not contribute to strengthen that, while, not actually reaching to shoal water, it remained itself in the air, if attacked !” *

On the 14th of January Hood left Barbadoes to proceed to Antigua, having been told that same day that the French fleet was seen steering for St. Kitt's. The following was written by one who was evidently present on the occasion :—

“On his passage Sir Samuel Hood was joined by the *Russel*, which had been under repair at Antigua, and by the *Prudent*, an old and very defective 64-gun ship from the North American station, where she had been incapable of service for several months in consequence of injuries received in an action the preceding year. These circumstances are adverted to in order to show the reader the sort of tools with which our British admirals had to work in that war ; and to enable him to form a more correct judgment on the exertions of the officers of that day. The British fleet, now augmented

* ‘Influence of Sea Power on the French Revolution,’ vol. i. p. 265.

to 22 sail of the line (6 of only 64 guns), anchored at Antigua. There Sir Samuel Hood heard that the enemy had actually commenced their attack on St. Christopher's. He sailed with the inadequate force of 700 troops, which was all he could get from the general commanding at Antigua, on the 23rd January, to relieve St. Christopher's, attacked by 9000 Frenchmen under Marquis de Bouville. Owing to an accident to the *Nymph* frigate, which was nearly cut in two by the *Alfred*, the leading ship of the starboard division,—an accident which caused much uneasiness to Sir Samuel Hood, who could but ill brook delay, for it was his hope to attack the enemy at anchor,—Sir Samuel Hood's plans had to be modified. The fleet lay to on the 24th in order to repair the damages to the *Alfred*, which also necessitated a new disposition of the fleet, the *St. Albans* being now ordered to take her place as leading ship. The flag officers were called on board, and the plan of operations contemplated communicated to them. Towards evening the look-out frigate made the signal that the enemy's fleet was standing out from Basseterre Road (St. Christopher). On the morning of the 25th the French fleet was seen a long way to leeward. At ten, the *Alfred's* damages being sufficiently repaired to proceed on service, the signal was made to form in line ahead, on the starboard tack; the French fleet was directly to leeward, and still on the larboard, or opposite, tack to the British. The signal was made for the van to fill and make a demonstration of proceeding to Basseterre. This was meant for a feint by Hood to perplex the adversary, who immediately tacked to prevent the intended movement. Hood recalled the van division, and brought to, as if determined to await the combat. This so completely deceived De Grasse that he again tacked, and continued to the southward in the expectation of the wind veering round to that quarter as the day advanced, and which would have enabled him to have laid up for the British fleet, when he again tacked, to the northward. Hood summoned the captain of the *St. Albans* to give him further instructions and to furnish him with his own pilot, who was well acquainted with the position of the bank on the edge of which Hood intended to anchor his fleet in order to prevent

the enemy anchoring outside him. It does not appear to have been conceived by De Grasse that Sir Samuel Hood, with a fleet so inferior in point of numbers to his own, would attempt to proceed to the anchorage he had quitted. The British fleet continued to lay to with their heads to the shore, or to the northward, while that of France continued standing out, or to the southward. This anxious moment of awful suspense, between the hope of being able to gain the anchorage, and the expectation of being compelled to fight on unequal terms a superior enemy under sail, is finely portrayed by Sir Samuel Hood in his public letter: 'Would the event of a battle have determined the fate of the island, I would without hesitation have attacked the enemy from a knowledge how much was to be expected from an English squadron, commanded by men among whom is no other contention than who should be most forward in rendering service to his king and country; herein I placed the utmost confidence, and should not, I trust, have been disappointed.'

"At one o'clock the French fleet, having got to a considerable distance from the land, the signal was made for the fleet to fill, and to form in a line ahead one cable's length asunder. No sooner was the line formed than the signal was made to the *St. Albans* to bear away and lead the fleet to the appointed rendezvous—Basseterre Road—keeping the Nevis shore close on board, in order to prevent the French fleet from getting within them. This was complied with so completely to the letter, that the *Solebay* was wrecked from not having room to pass between the line of battleships she was abreast of and the western point of Nevis. De Grasse appears to have beheld this with astonishment, and, as if doubtful whether it was a second feint, or a movement intended to be followed up by the British admiral, he seemed uncertain how to act. But when he perceived the whole fleet following their gallant leader, he backed his fleet together, . . . and, in consequence, the French fleet approached within gunshot at a little before three o'clock. De Grasse, who was in the centre of his line, fetched, in the *Ville de Paris*, nearly abreast of the *Canada*, while the headmost ship of his fleet was drawing in abreast

of Sir Samuel Hood's ship, the *Barfleur*. Their van boldly advanced towards the *Barfleur*, who reserved her fire until the brave Frenchman approached within musket shot, when she opened such a well-directed and quickly repeated fire that in a few minutes the French ship had her jib-boom shot away, her sails nearly cut into ribbons, and her rigging so cut up that she quickly put her helm a-weather, and bore away from her redoubted antagonist. De Grasse, perceiving an opening in our line, boldly attempted to sever it, but Cornwallis placed himself in the breach, which he so ably defended that his gigantic opponent was glad to relinquish the hazardous enterprise. Hood looked on undismayed at this attack upon his rear, knowing that he could confide in every individual captain, and very coolly ordered the signal to be made for the ships ahead to make more sail, in order to hasten their anchoring as soon as possible. In the meantime the *St. Albans* had taken up her station, and anchored at three P.M., and the other ships did the same in succession, while the centre and rear were closely engaged with the enemy, who pressed them close until every ship was anchored, when the French wore in succession and stood out to sea. On the morning of the 26th, at half-past eight, the French fleet was seen coming round Nevis Point, intending to force a passage; but so singularly felicitous was the position taken up by the British admiral, that when the enemy's leading ship approached the wind headed her, so that she could not fetch above the third ship in our line. The springs of our van ships were so admirably attended to that the broadsides of four of them were brought to bear at the same time upon the unfortunate Frenchmen, and were opened with tremendous effect. The crash occasioned by their destructive broadsides was so tremendous on board the ship (the *Pluton*) that whole pieces of plank were seen flying from her off side ere she could escape. The French ships generally approached the British van with more caution, with the exception of some, among them being the *Ville de Paris*. De Grasse, in order to prolong the individual encounter as much as possible, counter-braced his afteryards to retard his ship's way through the

water along the British line, and so the French flagship was detained a considerable time abreast of the *Resolution*, *Prudent*, *Canada*, and *Alfred* in succession, as the *Ville de Paris* slowly forged ahead and fired upon them.

"During this short but tremendous conflict between the respective combatants, nothing whatever could be seen of them for upwards of twenty minutes, save De Grasse's white flag gracefully floating above the immense volume of smoke, or the pendants of the other ships. In the afternoon the French made a second attack on our line. It commenced at fifty minutes past two, and was principally directed against the centre and rear, the morning attack having convinced them that the British van was not to be assailed with impunity. Never, perhaps, was a superior enemy so completely foiled as De Grasse was upon this occasion. He had doubtless calculated upon playing the old French game of crippling his adversary's ships by keeping at long-shot distance, as had been the practice of their fleets throughout the war, and by which ours would have been compelled to return into port. But now they had to encounter one whose head was not filled with theoretic tactics, but with a profound knowledge of his profession, as well as of the men whom he had the honour to command, and on whom he knew so well he could rely in the moment of difficulty or danger. Sir Samuel Hood not only secured his fleet from any assault by sea, but also took measures to prevent the enemy from molesting it from the land, where it was infinitely more vulnerable: for could they have thrown up any batteries on the hill situated above Green Point, his position would have been no longer tenable. To prevent such an attempt on the part of the enemy, he landed the troops that accompanied the fleet in Frigate's Bay, where they took post on the eminence that commanded the narrow neck which unites the southern point of St. Christopher's with the main island. Sir Samuel Hood offered to land 2400 men acting as marines. With these he proposed to attack the French posts at Basseterre in order to create a diversion in favour of the British garrison defending Brimstone Hill. The offer of the marines was declined by General Prescott, who

was in command on shore. The enemy's fleet made frequent demonstrations of attacking us, but never came near enough to engage. On the 12th February their fleet amounted to thirty-two ships of the line, a strong reinforcement from France having joined, which not only supplied the place of their disabled ships, but contributed to swell their numbers. On the 13th the Comte de Grasse despaired of being able to assail with any prospect of success our little fleet of twenty-two ships, and prudently anchored off Nevis. On the 14th a flag of truce arrived, giving the unwelcome intelligence of Brimstone Hill having surrendered." *

Another writer continues : " With the enemy in full possession of the island the anchorage off Basseterre was no longer tenable, while the quitting of it, in face of the superior force of the French fleet, now increased to thirty-two sail of the line, exclusive of several frigates, was difficult. On the 14th, however, Hood determined to make the attempt. He assembled the several captains in his cabin, made them set their watches by his, and gave orders that without signal at eleven o'clock that night they should cut their cables and put to sea. The manœuvre was performed without a hitch. The French, though not more than five miles distant, knew nothing of what was taking place till daylight on the 15th showed them the anchorage empty." †

On his way to Barbadoes Hood was joined by Rodney on his return from England, the fleet proceeding to Santa Lucia, where provisions and water to last five months were taken in. At daybreak on the 8th April, Rodney was informed that the enemy was coming out of Fort Royal, and standing to the north-west. So great was the despatch in getting under way that the whole British fleet was clear off before noon. Rodney commanded the centre, Hood the van, and Admiral Drake the rear division. " At sunset some of the French ships were seen from the masthead to the northward, and during the night their lights were discernible from the deck. At daylight on the 9th we had gained on the enemy. At half-past seven

* Captain Thomas White, R.N., 'Naval Researches.'

† 'Dictionary of National Biography.'

Sir Samuel Hood's division, being ahead, got the breeze ; the centre and rear divisions continued to be becalmed under the high land of Dominica. This separated the former from the others ; however, Sir Samuel Hood continued to pursue the fourteen ships of the enemy that were in possession of the breeze with only eight ships of his own division. At half-past nine that part of the French fleet bore down upon and engaged Hood's isolated division. The Comte de Grasse (in command of the French fleet) made his attack upon this division in a most seamanlike manner in perfect conformity with the rules of practical tactics. Each ship bore down to engage in rotation, then passed on ahead, tacked, and again fell into the rear in order to keep up a regular combat with fresh ships. As soon as the breeze reached the other ships of Hood's division, they came up under press of sail to support their gallant commander. The crew of the *Royal Oak* passed under the lee of the *Barfleur*, filled the lower top-mast and top-gallant rigging to give their admiral three cheers." * The account of this engagement, which preceded Rodney's action, is thus continued : "Admiral Hood in the *Barfleur* at one time had seven ships firing upon him, and his other ships were also attacked by superior numbers ; but, animated by the resolve to detain the enemy until the centre and rear could arrive to their assistance, these eight ships maintained the conflict with the greatest gallantry. At length the centre of the British fleet felt the influence of the freshening breeze, and the leading ships arrived on the scene, and were soon followed by Rodney in the *Formidable* with two other 90-gun ships. The French commander-in-chief, now perceiving that it was out of his power to destroy the British van, relinquished the attempt, and made sail, despatching two of his ships, which had suffered most, to Guadeloupe." †

The British fleet lay to from the 9th to the 10th April, in order to repair damages. The pursuit of the French was then continued, Drake's division being now in the van and Hood's in the rear. Both fleets "were engaged working up

* Captain Thomas White, R.N., 'Naval Researches.'

† G. R. Low, 'Her Majesty's Navy.'

the narrow channel between Dominica and Guadeloupe, but on the 11th a fair wind had enabled De Grasse to gain considerably on his persistent enemy, who was almost out of sight." Rodney tried several manœuvres to come up with his adversary, and bring him to an engagement, one being to cut off two French ships, which were lagging behind owing to their injuries, in the hope that De Grasse might come to their assistance. In that Rodney was successful, for "the French admiral bore down with his whole fleet to protect them. So passed the day and night of the 11th April. At daybreak on the following morning, the British fleet being then on the starboard tack, about five leagues off Prince Rupert's Bay, and the French on the port tack to windward of the Saintes, Rodney made the signal for close action, and the van of the British line, led by the *Marlborough*, became closely engaged with the enemy about eight o'clock." * The account of that great battle, and how Rodney, perceiving a break in the enemy's line, passed through it with his division; how the British ships then wore round, doubling upon the enemy, and placing the French van between two fires; how Rodney obtained the weather gauge, to the discomfiture of De Grasse; and how our ships desperately fought with no less desperate Frenchmen, etc., belongs more properly to a memoir of the commander-in-chief on that day. † Hood's division, which on the 9th April had been in the van, and had borne the lion's share of the fighting was now, as has been said, in the rear, and unable to take part in the commencement of the action. But coming up opportunely when De Grasse made an ineffectual attempt to reform his line by his van, Hood was able to render the victory more decisive on the one side and the ruin greater on the other. The French flagship, the *Ville de Paris*, had been closely and vigorously beset by her old and gallant antagonist the *Canada*, by which she had been handled severely, when Hood came up in the *Barfleur* and poured in "a tremendous and destructive fire, which is said to have killed sixty men outright; but Admiral de Grasse, wishing to signalise as much as possible the loss of so fine and

* G. R. Low, 'Her Majesty's Navy.'

† See p. 172-176.

favourite a ship, endured the repetition of the fire for about a quarter of an hour longer. He then struck his flag to the *Barfleur* and surrendered himself a prisoner to Sir Samuel Hood. It was said that at the time the *Ville de Paris* struck there were but three men left alive and unhurt on the upper deck, and that the Comte de Grasse was one of the three. . . . On board the *Ville de Paris* were found thirty-six chests of money for the pay of the troops intended for the invasion of Jamaica, as well as the artillery for the same enterprise. The *Ville de Paris*, the only first-rate man-of-war that ever was taken and carried into port by any commander of any nation, had been a present to Louis XIV. from the city of Paris, and was said to have cost £176,000 sterling in her building and equipment, an unheard-of price in those days, when £1000 a gun was the ordinary charge for a ship of the line."* The remainder of the French fleet had fled before its admiral struck his flag, and were followed by the British until night, when the latter was recalled.

"The British fleet lay under Guadeloupe for three days to repair damages. On the 17th April, Rodney detached Hood, with those vessels which had suffered the least, to pick up stragglers. On the 19th five sail of the enemy were perceived endeavouring to effect their escape through the Mona Passage, when the signal for chase was given. The French were becalmed and overtaken. The *Caton* and *Jason* were captured, besides a frigate of 32 guns and a sloop of 16 guns."† In detailing this service to Rodney, Hood concludes his letter thus: "It is a very mortifying circumstance to relate to you, sir, that the French fleet, which you put to flight on the 12th (26 in number, including frigates), went through the Mona Channel on the 18th, the day before I was in it."‡

Thus Hood put the finishing touch to Rodney's action, as on the 8th April he had commenced it. The victory was a very great one, though it might have been greater; but the supreme days of doing and daring of Nelson's time were yet to come.

* G. R. Low, 'Her Majesty's Navy.'

† Ibid.

‡ Official letter of Sir Samuel Hood to Sir George Rodney, 22nd April, 1782.

For his services in that battle Hood was raised to the peerage of Ireland as Baron Hood of Catherington. He received a very handsome acknowledgment of his own particular services in an official letter from the king; and the Freedom of the City of London, contained in a gold casket, was also conferred upon him.

Hood remained a short time longer in the West Indies, going to England for a few months on leave. He returned in October of 1782, taking with him in the *Barfleur* Prince William, as has already been related. On peace being declared in 1783 he once more returned home. In 1787-88 he was commander-in-chief at Portsmouth, having been promoted Vice-Admiral of the Blue on the 24th September, 1787. In July, 1788, having previously been elected Member for Westminster, he joined the Board of Admiralty, with Lord Chatham as First Lord. He became vice-admiral on the 1st February, 1793, and remained in England until the declaration of war by the French revolutionary government in that month, when he was appointed commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, hoisting his flag on board the *Victory*, in which ship he sailed on the 22nd May of the same year.

Hood arrived off Toulon, to invest it, on the 16th July, and on the 23rd August commissioners went on board the admiral's ship to negotiate terms. Hood issued manifestoes to the inhabitants, saying that if an explicit declaration in favour of the King of France was made at Toulon and Marseilles, the French royal standard hoisted, and the ships and forts handed over to him (the latter to be returned when peace was re-established), the inhabitants should have all the protection for themselves and property which the British fleet could afford. Those terms were accepted, and Hood took possession of Toulon on the 28th August. In the short space allowed us it is not possible to give an adequate account of the occupation of this great French maritime station. We may, however, briefly quote Nelson's description of the doings of those stirring times. "On Sunday, August 25th," he wrote, "a party deposed Admiral Trogoff (the French commander), and placed St. Julien at the head of the Fleet, manned

sixteen sail of the line, and were determined to come out and fight us, who were only twelve sail, Lord Hood having sent away the other part of his fleet to give them the option ; the French regret they did not ; the issue we should doubtless have liked better than laying them up dismantled. The perseverance of our fleet has been great ; and to that only can be attributed our unexampled success. Not even a boat could get into Marseilles or Toulon. . . . The Spanish Fleet arrived as ours was sailing into the harbour, and joined in the general joy which this event must give to all Europe. St. Julien, with about 4000 men, left the Fleet as ours entered. . . . No fleet, I am certain, ever served their country with greater zeal than ours has done, from the Admiral to the lowest sailor. . . . What an event this has been for Lord Hood : such an one as History cannot produce its equal ; that the strongest place in Europe, and twenty sail of the line, etc., should be given up without firing a shot. It is not to be credited." * The retention of Toulon by the allies was full of difficulty, and Hood's task an arduous one, though his conduct of affairs at this juncture drew from Nelson the following emphatic commendation : " Lord Hood is so good an officer that every one must respect him. All the foreigners at Toulon absolutely worship him ; were any accident to happen to him I am sure no person in the fleet could supply his place." †

How, owing to the want of troops and assistance from our allies, and to the investment of the place by 40,000 or 50,000 Republican troops against 11,000 on the side of the allies (" among the French officers being the young Napoleon Bonaparte, who here entered upon his remarkable career, his first and last military experiences being against the English enemies of his country" ‡), the evacuation of Toulon was decided upon, we again quote Nelson's words : " On 17th (December), at eight o'clock at night, a general attack was made on all our outposts, which lasted all night ; the foreign troops quitted

* Captain Horatio Nelson to Mrs. Nelson, off Toulon, 11th September, 1793.

† Captain Horatio Nelson to Mrs. Nelson, 12th October, 1793.

‡ G. R. Low, ' Her Majesty's Navy.'

them sooner than they ought to have done. . . . Lord Hood attempted to rally the flying troops, but the torrent was too strong. . . . Lord Hood showed himself the same collected good officer, which he always was ; he was the admiration of every one . . . he exposed himself to great danger." The situation being no longer tenable, a council of war was called, and it was agreed to embark the troops. Nelson continues : " Lord Hood was obliged to order the French fleet, twenty sail of the line, twenty other men of war,* together with the Arsenal (Dockyard) Powder magazines, etc., to be set on fire."† . . . " The mob had risen, was plundering and committing every excess. . . . The quitting of Toulon by us, I am satisfied, is a national benefit both in money . . . and in saving some of our gallant English blood, which, when the muster comes to be taken, will appear to have flowed plentifully. The destruction of the Fleet and Arsenal, and indeed of the harbour of Toulon for a number of years, is a great benefit to England."‡ " Humane, as brave," another writer adds, " Lord Hood received on board the British and captured ships nearly 15,000 men, women, and children before he left."§ The scene of the burning ships and stores, with the roar of the exploding magazines of powder ashore and afloat, and the panic-stricken cries of those left behind, has been described as very striking and terrible.

Toulon gone, Corsica now occupied Hood's thoughts. That island " in its existing political condition of revolt against France under the leadership of Paoli, appeared to offer the strategic situation which Hood was seeking. There was believed to be a disposition to accept the protection of Great Britain as the only means of dispossessing the French troops, who still held the seaports of San Fiorenzo, Bastia, and Calvi."|| Sir Gilbert Elliott went to confer with Paoli, who had proposed the annexation of the island to the British Crown.

* The number of ships is probably overstated.

† Captain Horatio Nelson to Rev. William Nelson, 27th December, 1793.

‡ Captain Horatio Nelson to H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence, 27th December, 1793.

§ Lodge's 'Portraits.

|| Mahan, 'Influence of Sea Power on the French Revolution.'

Hood sailed from Hyères, whither he had proceeded on leaving Toulon, for San Fiorenzo Bay in January, 1794; but being obliged by a storm to go to Porto Ferrajo, he sent Nelson and a detachment of his fleet with troops against San Fiorenzo, which was taken on the 17th February. The admiral then urged an attack by sea and land on Bastia; but the general commanding the troops refused help, and, after a strong altercation between the two, Hood resolved to rely only on his own resources. Bastia surrendered on the 22nd May, in great part owing to the bravery and indefatigable energy of Nelson, who thus triumphantly refers to its capture: "All has been done by Seamen and troops embarked to serve as mariners, except a few Artillery under the orders of Lord Hood, who has given in this instance a most astounding proof of the vigour of his mind and of his zeal and judgment. His thanks . . . are as handsome as can be penned. Four thousand five hundred men have laid down their arms to under 1200 troops and seamen; it is an event as is hardly on record. Seventy pieces of ordnance, with an incredible quantity of stores are taken, with a man-of-war of 22 guns. The *Fortunée* was destroyed at Fiorenzo, the *Minerva* taken, *La Flèche* here; therefore three out of four of my antagonists are gone."* Nelson adds: "Every lover of his country will rejoice in our great and almost unexampled success, to the honour of my Lord Hood, and to the shame of those who opposed his endeavours to serve his country."†

On the 9th June Hood received news that the French fleet under Admiral Martin had put to sea. He also sailed, and came in sight of the enemy anchored in the Golfe de Jouan. As the wind died away, the attack, which had been well planned, could not be carried out. And when the breeze once more became favourable, the enemy, during the interval, had thrown up batteries on shore, and otherwise so strengthened his position that attack was no longer deemed possible. Leaving the greater part of his fleet under Vice-Admiral Hotham to maintain the blockade of Admiral Martin, Hood returned to

* Captain Horatio Nelson to Rev. William Nelson, 30th May, 1794.

† Captain Horatio Nelson to Sir William Hamilton, 24th May, 1794.

Corsica to continue the siege of Calvi. How that last stronghold fell, how Nelson, acting under Hood's orders, conducted the siege, finding, as he had at Bastia, the opportunity of distinguishing himself so ardently desired, and how he was wounded, are matters upon which we cannot dwell now.*

The French were driven from Corsica; and on the 19th June, 1794, the crown of that island was offered to the King of England. The offering of an additional crown to his sovereign, which his brilliant conduct of affairs did so much to bring about, was a fitting close to Hood's active service. His promotion to the rank of admiral was obtained on the 12th April, and he sailed for England on leave, expecting to return; and it was only when about to sail for the Mediterranean that he received orders to strike his flag. He never went to sea again.

Hood was in disfavour at the Admiralty. Notwithstanding his services, which comprised the taking or the destruction of no less than 42 of the enemy's ships of war; the brilliant deeds from which he had but now returned; his tact in diplomacy; and his great reputation and experience as a sailor, the authorities at home elected to take umbrage at the strictures which he had passed upon the conduct of affairs of the Navy in respect to the condition of the ships under him. That, though outspoken, Hood was in the right is proved, if the state of the *Agamemnon* in March, 1794, can be taken as a sample of the rest of the fleet, for Nelson had written: "We are really without firing, wine, beef, pork, flour, and almost without water; not a rope, canvas, twine, or nail in the ship, . . . and not a man has slept dry for many months."† But narrowness of mind, professional jealousies, and the disease known as "red tape" were not unknown in those days; and in the indulgence of the two first and the evils of the last resulted injustice to the individual and detriment to the interests of the country.

Hood was therefore superseded—a measure which drew from Nelson a characteristic condemnation, as well as an

* See below, p. 299.

† Captain Horatio Nelson to Lord Hood, 26th March, 1794.

interesting expression of opinion as to Hood's merits as a commander: "Oh, miserable Board of Admiralty!" he wrote; "they have forced the first officer in our service away from his command. The fleet must regret the loss of Lord Hood, the best officer, take him altogether, that England has to boast of. Lord Howe is certainly a great officer in the management of a fleet, but that is all. Lord Hood is equally great in all situations which an admiral can be placed in."

His sovereign, however, signified his continued approval of his services. Hood's wife was created Baroness Hood in the peerage of Great Britain. On the 25th March, 1795, he was elected an Elder Brother of the Trinity House; and in March, 1796, was appointed Governor of Greenwich Hospital, a post which he held until his death. He was created a Viscount of Great Britain on the 1st June, 1797; and on the extension of the Bath the highest grade of that order was conferred upon him.

In regard to Hood's character and professional abilities we have already given the opinions of the king and of Nelson. Another writer of his earlier days says, "In every instance of his active service he has given constant proofs not only of an undaunted resolution, but of a sober and unostentatious progress of professional skill, which left no doubt of his superior mind; he became successively the favourite of every commander under whom he served. Many of his letters abound with proofs of a clearness of discrimination, and a promptness and vigour of judgment, which might have amply qualified him for any public station. . . . His manners and conversation were of a superior order; the former, indeed, amounted to high politeness." * Sir William Hotham wrote of him later: "I never saw an officer of more intrepid courage, or warmer zeal; no difficulties stood in his way, and he was a stranger to any feeling of nervous diffidence about himself. Without the least disposition to severity, there was something about him which made his inferior officers stand in awe of him. He was so watchful upon his post himself, that those who acted with him were afraid to slumber. He was exceedingly liberal,

* Lodge's 'Portraits.'

and never was, or could have been, a rich man." * It is also interesting to note that modern criticism confirms the opinion already expressed, for Captain Mahan, quoting Nelson's estimate of Hood's character, enthusiastic though it was, says, "In the judgment of the writer, Nelson's estimate of Hood is as accurate as it is moderate in expression." To Hood credit is also due "for improving the talents and directing the spirits of enterprise and intrepidity of Nelson's earlier years," as Lord Hawkesbury said in the House of Lords in the Eulogy pronounced on the death of the Hero of Trafalgar. †

Much more of public interest might be added about Hood's long and eventful life and services, many details of which have been but barely touched upon here; about his intimate relations and friendship with Nelson (whose niece his grandson ‡ afterwards married); his correspondence with the Duke of Clarence, Nelson, his brother Lord Bridport, and others,—but space prevents this. Much might also be written on Hood's celebrated contest in 1788 for the vacant Parliamentary seat of the City of Westminster, when Charles James Fox was pitted against him, and of which contest Lord Robert Seymour wrote in his diary: "The Riotts at the Westr. Election are carried such lengths the Military obliged to be called into the assistance of Lord Hood's party. Several Persons have been killed, . . . Mr. Fox very narrowly escaped being killed by a Bayonet. wch. w'd certainly have been fatal had not a poor Black saved, him f'm the blow." §

In fact, afloat and ashore, Hood's active life was mainly spent in fighting, excepting the closing years of it; and even those were passed by him, as Governor of the Royal Hospital, in the atmosphere of past battles among veterans, who had served with him and others, and who, in the winter of their days, still lived and revelled in the recollection of doughty deeds of war, fighting them over again by the fireside or in the sunny corners down at Greenwich in their well-earned repose.

* Sir William Hotham's MSS.

† Lord Hawkesbury's Speech, 28th January, 1806.

‡ Samuel Lord Bridport.

§ 'Collections and Recollections,' by "One who has kept a diary."

Lord Hood married Susannah, daughter of Edward Linzee of Portsmouth, who, created a peeress in her own right in 1795, predeceased him in 1806. He left one son, Henry, who succeeded him in the title, and who afterwards became Lord Chamberlain to Queen Caroline. Lord Hood died on the 27th January, 1816, in the ninety-second year of his age, and lies buried in the ancient cemetery of Greenwich Hospital.

XV.

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET THE EARL OF ST. VINCENT, G.C.B.

BY THE VISCOUNT ST. VINCENT AND L. G. CARR
LAUGHTON.

TO most people the first Earl of St. Vincent was the man who received his title because Nelson helped him to beat the Spaniards on St. Valentine's Day. It is a pity that this should be so, for St. Vincent benefited the Navy and his country almost as much as did his younger contemporary: but he did not have so large a share in the actual fighting, he had not the sympathetic temperament of Nelson, and his great work of reform made for him many foes while naturally it did not appeal to the general public.

Swynfen Jervis, the father of John Jervis, was a barrister and a member of an old Staffordshire family long resident at Meaford. His wife, Elizabeth, was sister to Sir Thomas Parker, Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, who was a connection of Lord Anson's: it was therefore in this direction that the naval interest of the family lay. John Jervis was the second son, and was born at Meaford on the 9th January, 1733. He was sent to school at Burton-on-Trent, whence he was transferred in 1747 to a private school at Greenwich, on the occasion of his father becoming treasurer of Greenwich Hospital. The naval atmosphere in which the boy found himself warped his inclination from the law, for which he had been destined, and turned his thoughts to the sea, and on the 4th January, 1748 he was entered as AB on board the *Gloucester*,



St Vincent

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET THE EARL OF ST. VINCENT. G.C.B.

flying the broad pennant of the Hon. George Townshend and then under orders for Jamaica. He was rated midshipman in 1752 and moved into the *Severn*, Captain Henry Dennis, with whom he came home in the *Sphinx* two years later.*

Falling, as it did, in the interval between the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War, there is nothing remarkable about Jervis's early service. On the completion of his six years, in January, 1755, he passed his examination, and a month later was appointed lieutenant of the *Royal George*, from which ship he was immediately transferred to the *Nottingham*, forming part of Boscawen's fleet for Louisbourg. After a year in her he joined the *Devonshire*, but three months later was appointed to the *Prince* and in her went out to the Mediterranean. Rear-Admiral Saunders, one of Anson's old Centurions, hoisted his flag in her, and the interest he showed in Jervis seems to point to more than an appreciation on his part of the connection between his lieutenant and his old chief. For some years after this date Jervis followed the fortunes of Saunders. He moved into the *Culloden* with him; he was lent by him to the *Experiment*, whose captain was invalided, and commanded her in a sharp action with a French privateer off Cape Gata in March, 1757. He returned to the flagship, in June followed Saunders to the *St. George*, and in May, 1758, when Saunders was superseded, he returned to England in the *Foudroyant*, 80, a prize and, both then and for years after, one of the finest two-deckers in the British Navy. Jervis, we have seen, was not without interest, and 1759 was no time for a man with a friend at head-quarters to be unemployed. On the 15th January he joined the *Neptune*, flag-ship of Vice-Admiral Charles Saunders in his memorable expedition to Canada. He was appointed by the commander-in-chief acting commander of

* The details of Jervis's early appointments are only to be found in the 'Dictionary of National Biography.' The two standard biographies, by Captain Brenton, R.N., and J. S. Tucker are neither of them any authority for this period of his life. Tucker's father was for many years secretary to Lord St. Vincent, and in consequence the recollections he gives, as well as the letters, are valuable. But owing to his uncritical attitude there is much in his book that cannot be accepted. This last remark also applies to Captain Brenton.

the 14-gun sloop *Porcupine*, and in her on the 9th July led the transports past the batteries of Quebec. Wolfe himself, who had been a schoolfellow of Jervis's at Greenwich, went up with him in the *Porcupine*. He was much struck with the ability and character of the young seaman, to whom, as the story goes, he imparted his last trust. He had a strong presentiment that he would fall in the coming battle, and to Jervis he confided a message to the lady he was to have married: as Jervis was shortly afterwards transferred to the *Scorpion* and sent home with despatches, there is every probability that he delivered the message in person. He was ordered to return immediately with despatches for General Amherst. He sailed from Portsmouth in the *Scorpion*; but the ship was old and leaky and was making water at such a rate that he was bound to put into Plymouth. On the 12th January he was ordered to turn over to the *Albany* and to proceed at once, in accordance with which instructions he weighed anchor on the 13th. Tucker has rather a characteristic tale about this incident. His version is that the *Scorpion* had bad weather coming round from Portsmouth; that as soon as the *Albany's* people heard that they were to be sent to a distant station instead of being kept, as usual, in the Channel, they broke out into open mutiny, which was only quelled by the prompt action of Jervis, who, having brought with him a boat's crew of *Scorpions*, ordered them to make sail and cut the cables. It has lately been pointed out* that the *Scorpion* did not have bad weather coming round from Portsmouth, and that what made her case hopeless was that the weather was moderate and the sea smooth; also that the *Albany's* log not only has no mention of any mutiny, but exhibits the entry for the 13th January: "6 A.M., weighed and made sail; stowed the anchors," which of course could not have been done if the anchors had been at the bottom of the sea. Indeed there seems to be no truth in the story from first to last, though it is possible that the *Albany's* people may not have been over well pleased at the turn of events. However, the ship with Jervis still in command was back

* *Army and Navy Gazette*, November 22, 1890.

again in England in May, after which she was attached to the Channel fleet under Rodney.

On the 13th October, 1760, he was posted to the *Gosport*, 44, and in her served during the next year in the North Sea. On the 11th May, 1762, being then in charge of the North American trade, and in company with Captain, afterwards Sir Joshua, Rowley of the *Superb*, who was convoying the outward-bound East and West Indiamen, he had a meeting with a French squadron. This was a force under M. de Ternay which, destined for an attack on Newfoundland, had evaded Sir Edward Hawke in the Channel during a fog. The combined convoys were of great value, and might easily have been taken had not the French then, as always, considered the ulterior designs of their expedition. As it was M. de Ternay respected the bold front presented by the *Superb*, *Gosport* and *Danae*, and sheered off. Newfoundland was denuded of troops and the French succeeded in taking St. John's, though in this, as Mr. Clowes notices, they did far less harm than they would have done had they turned aside after the convoy. In September, 1762, Jervis in the *Gosport* joined Commodore Lord Colville, then operating for the recovery of Newfoundland. De Ternay with his ships managed to escape when a gale had blown the blockading force off the coast, but the island was recovered at once,* and Jervis returned to England and paid off in the spring of 1763. The country was now at peace, and Jervis was on half-pay for six years.

In February, 1769, Captain Jervis was appointed to the *Alarm* frigate, one of the first of the copper-sheathed ships which eventually became universal in the Navy. In her he went out to the Mediterranean and on the 9th September, the ship lying then at Genoa, two Turkish slaves escaped from a galley lying at the Mole, and took refuge in one of her boats. They were forcibly taken out of it by the guard. Jervis immediately lodged a protest through the British consul, insisting that the slaves must be delivered up and the offenders punished. Satisfaction did not appear to be forthcoming,

* See above, p. 223.

so, on the following day, Jervis sent his *ultimatum* to the Doge, threatening hostilities for non-compliance. As a result, on the 11th, the slaves were delivered up and the Government expressed strong disapproval of the action of the guard ; but this was not enough for Jervis, who demanded that the guard should be sent on board the *Alarm* to make a formal apology. This, however, was not done ; but on hearing that the culprits had been imprisoned Jervis let the matter drop. The *Alarm* continued in the Mediterranean and on the 30th March, 1770, being then moored in the Bay of Marseilles, was caught by a heavy gale. On the 31st the gale grew to a hurricane ; in the words of the *Alarm's* log—

“The wind increased to a most impetuous degree. The best bower parted. Let go the sheet anchor instantly, and on the ships not bringing up, the small bower, but she would not look at them, till within influence of the surge, where she brought up and struck violently.”

Orders were immediately given to cut away the masts and attempts were made to heave her off, but without success. With much difficulty and with the zealous aid of the French the people were all got ashore, and subsequently the ship was hove down and repaired. She had suffered very great damage, and the speed and economy with which he made her fit for service again were highly to the credit of her captain. It was not till the spring of 1771 that the *Alarm* returned to England and paid off. In the following August the frigate was selected to attend the Duke of Gloucester, who was to spend the winter in Italy for the benefit of his health. It was pleasant service, chiefly of a social nature, and was prolonged till May when the *Alarm* again returned to England. From this date Jervis was again on half-pay, but characteristically determined to spend his leisure in an advantageous manner.

In October he crossed over to France and, after a few weeks' sight-seeing, settled himself at Lyons, where he remained for four months, mastering the French language. At the end of this period he undertook a tour through France, from which he did not return till November, 1773. In the following summer he and Captain Samuel Barrington, who was his closest friend, took a passage up the Baltic in a merchant vessel.

Jervis's disposition was essentially utilitarian, and though presented at the Russian court and enjoying for a while its pleasures, he was not in the least likely to lose sight of the real object of his journey. For the outward passage he had provided himself with charts, which, as he knew well, were very faulty, and had lost no opportunity of correcting them. He and Barrington now entered upon a conscientious study of the dockyards and arsenals of Europe. They began by gathering all the information available concerning the Russian fleet, then seemingly, as now, a *terra incognita* to most Englishmen. The tour was continued through Stockholm, Carlsrona and Copenhagen, always with the same objects ; and, after visiting Lübeck, Hamburg and Holland, Jervis returned home, bringing with him a great quantity of naval information. In the following year the friends renewed their tour of inspection and coasted along the northern and western shores of France, visiting the dockyards, noting the pilotage, and paying very particular attention to the roadstead of Brest. This proved of great use in after-years, though Jervis later had occasion to regret that he had not found an opportunity of surveying the land approaches to the citadel of Brest. On his return home he was appointed to the *Kent*, 74, but before he joined her she went ashore and was so seriously damaged that she had to be paid off. He was accordingly appointed, on the 1st September, 1775, to the *Foudroyant*, of which ship he had previously been lieutenant.

For a while the *Foudroyant* was employed as guard-ship at Plymouth, after which she was sent on cruises or on convoy service. It was not till 1778 that she was attached to the grand fleet, then under the command of Admiral Keppel. The ship herself was exceptionally good and, knowing in what direction Jervis's talent lay, we may well believe her company to have been worthy of her. Seemingly this was appreciated by the admiral, who placed her next astern of his flagship the *Victory* in the drawn battle with D'Orvilliers off Brest on the 27th July, 1778.* Of the share that Jervis had in that battle not much need be said, let it suffice that he performed

* See above, p. 235.

his part creditably ; it is his conduct at the subsequent court-martial on Keppel that is interesting, rather than what he did in a scrambling half-fought fight which is remarkable chiefly for the blunders and disobedience on both sides. The interest of the court-martial was political rather than naval, for the strained relations which existed between Keppel and his third in command, Sir Hugh Palliser, and which were responsible in no small degree for the need of a court-martial, were due to Keppel's being a Whig while Palliser was a Tory. Jervis was also a staunch Whig and gave evidence very strongly in favour of Keppel, on whose side the bulk of public sympathy was interested. " I cannot," said Jervis, " boast a long acquaintance with Admiral Keppel ; I never had the honour to serve under him before ; but I am happy in this opportunity to declare to this court, and to the whole world, that, during the whole time the English fleet was in sight of the French fleet, he displayed the greatest naval skill and ability, and the boldest enterprise, on the 27th July, which, with the promptitude and obedience of Vice-Admiral Sir Robert Harland, will be the subjects of my admiration and of my imitation as long as I live." It is worth noting here that Keppel himself, by his answers at the court-martial, betrayed the fact that he did not properly appreciate the French tactics of the day. Seemingly Jervis was in like case ; but it is not on his skill as a tactician that his great reputation rests. He was a strategist, a disciplinarian, and an administrator, but in tactics he was content to follow the beaten path. During 1779 the *Foudroyant* remained with the Channel fleet, and was with Sir Charles Hardy when the allied French and Spanish fleets came off the Isle of Wight. The disparity of force was very great, and Hardy, rightly enough, did not engage. Jervis afterwards wrote in a private letter that the retreat before the enemy had left him in a humbled state of mind, although he had not believed in the possibility of an invasion. It is very much to be doubted whether any good purpose could have been served by giving battle ; at any rate, Hardy's end was gained when an easterly gale blew the allies out of the Channel. Following this, Jervis in the *Foudroyant* took part in the two

expeditions for the relief of Gibraltar, which went out in 1780 and 1781 under Rodney and Darby. Between the two he served under Geary.

In 1782 the *Foudroyant* was attached to Vice-Admiral the Honourable Samuel Barrington's division of the Channel fleet, which on the 19th April was fortunate enough to fall in off Brest with a French convoy intended for the East Indies. The *Foudroyant* was the best sailer of the English ships and gave chase to the largest of the French men-of-war, which proved to be the *Pégase*, 74. She came up with the chase shortly after midnight, when, being on her port quarter, it was seen that the enemy had starboarded her helm in order to rake her. Jervis's first impulse was to put his own helm a-starboard and engage broadside to broadside, but a midshipman, Bowen, who afterwards when Captain of the *Terpsichore* fell at Santa Cruz de Teneriffe in Nelson's unfortunate expedition, exclaimed, "If we port our helm, sir, we shall rake him." Jervis immediately adopted the suggestion, the *Pégase* was raked, and after a sharp action of fifty minutes, struck her flag. Jervis's lucky star was in the ascendant. The Rockingham ministry had just come into power, and it was most opportune to it that a Whig captain should, at that particular moment, achieve a pronounced success, for the unpopularity of the war under Lord North had been due chiefly to its misfortunes. By the Government Jervis was made a K.B. and a baronet, by the populace he was enthroned as the hero of the hour. Posterity can look further still and see that this break-up of the French convoy, of which the bulk was taken, crippled the hand of Suffren in the East Indies and thus afforded distinct though indirect assistance to Sir Edward Hughes. The result of the actual engagement, it may be said, was a foregone conclusion; for though the disparity of force was not great the French ship was newly out of port, while the *Foudroyant* had been for years subject to Jervis's discipline. This may be a good reason for condemning the system which could send out a ship so inefficiently manned as the *Pégase*, but it is no reason at all for refusing to Jervis credit due for maintaining the *Foudroyant* at a high pitch of excellence. The *Pégase* lost heavily in this

action, while the *Foudroyant's* casualties amounted to five men wounded, among whom was the captain who was hit between the eyes by a splinter.

On Jervis's private life, too, this action had a marked influence. He was now, for the first time, comparatively a rich man, and as such, felt himself free to marry. In October he was again at Gibraltar under Howe, and was present at the consequent skirmish with the enemy on the 20th October. Following this he returned to England, was paid off, and was married to his cousin Martha, daughter of Sir Thomas Parker, to whom he had long been attached. Though it is certain that want of means had prevented his marrying before, it seems equally certain that in the stories he told in old age of the poverty of his youth he was inclined to exaggerate. He had never allowed his lack of means to stand in the way when he believed that a chance offered of benefiting his future career. The motives that led him to mix whenever possible in the best society, were near akin to those that sent him on his tours through the European dockyards ; and we may say that by years of calculating economies and self-restraint, he qualified himself to suppress the mutinies of 1797, no less than Hawke by long and hard service in subordinate positions qualified himself to snatch his most brilliant victory at Quiberon Bay. In 1783 a conjoint expedition was projected against the Spanish West Indies, and Jervis hoisted his broad pennant on board the *Salisbury*, as commander of the naval branch of it. However the peace prevented the expedition from sailing, and he was not again employed as a post-captain.

Jervis now began his political career, entering Parliament for Launceston. On party questions he always voted as a Whig, but, like many other service members, seldom spoke save on service matters. In the general election of 1784 he was returned for Yarmouth ; and a recollection of the debt he owed to this constituency led him in after-years, when his peerage was in prospect, to consider whether he could not take his title from that place. In 1785 and the following year, a Parliamentary Commission sat to inquire into the defences of the principal dockyards, and Jervis was appointed as one of

its members. Pitt had taken it into his head that Portsmouth and Plymouth were insufficiently fortified, and that it was imperative that large sums should immediately be spent for their defence. The existing fortifications, it was said, would be quite unequal to meeting an attack delivered in force, and for this it was necessary to be prepared ; for, argued the supporters of the Government, hitherto their chief defence has lain in the fleet ; think what would happen some day when that fleet should be absent. Jervis went to the root of the matter at once. He said the fleet was not likely to be absent, at any rate from the neighbourhood of the attacking force. His views are essentially those that obtain to-day. He did not believe in huge fortifications, he did not believe in a patrol of squadrons on the coast, though he agreed that it might be necessary to keep a few ships in the Channel "to please the old ladies ;" the proper duty for the main fleet was to him, as to us, to observe the enemy's force, and to lose no opportunity of bringing it to action directly it left port. He had some difficulty in persuading the committee to adopt his views, but eventually, thanks to the exertions of Jervis and the other naval members, amongst whom was Barrington, the proposal was negatived in the House of Commons.

On the 24th September, 1787, Sir John was advanced to the rank of rear-admiral, and for a few weeks hoisted his flag in the *Carnatic*. Similarly, in 1790, when trouble with Spain threatened, he hoisted it on board the *Prince*, 98, in command of a division of the fleet under Howe ; but as Spain could not find the force necessary to back her pretensions, there was nothing for the fleet to do, and Jervis returned to political life, being in this year elected member for Wycombe. In 1793, being still in Opposition, he voted against the proposed war with France, but when that war was determined upon immediately offered his services.

On the 1st February of this year he became vice-admiral and towards its close was appointed commander-in-chief of a conjoint expedition against the French West India islands. The troops were under Sir Charles, afterwards the first Earl Grey, and the co-operation throughout was most hearty.

Jervis hoisted his flag on board the *Boyne*, 98, Captain George Grey, son of Sir Charles, and in January, 1794, the expedition reached Barbadoes. The campaign opened briskly and successfully, Martinique, Santa Lucia and Guadeloupe being taken; but much of the work had to be done under the tropical rains, and fever asserted itself. Jervis suffered much in health, while the troops were greatly weakened. The force withdrew to St. Kitts, whither news came of a French landing at Guadeloupe, and the *Boyne* had to go south again. But the troops were very weakly, and, though seamen were landed to help them, not much could be done. In November Sir John was relieved, and sailed for England in the *Boyne*. On the 1st July following he was promoted to be admiral.

In November he hoisted his flag again and entered upon the most important part of his career. He went out in the *Lively* frigate to take over the command of the Mediterranean fleet, and badly did the Mediterranean fleet need him. Hotham's command in that quarter had not raised English prestige, and there was every reason to believe that the Spaniards would soon join hands with the French, who were already numerically superior to the English on that station. The war was immediately pushed on with vigour. There was to be no more idling in port, for Jervis at once began that rigid system of blockade which henceforth was so marked a feature of the war. Nominally the fleet wherewith Toulon was closed, was twenty-five sail of the line strong, but of these seven were detached off Cadiz, with Rear-Admiral Man, while others were constantly away on minor services. Thus it happened that Jervis's force rarely rose even to a numerical equality with the fifteen ships he was watching. That the French attempted nothing by sea was largely due to the bad condition of their fleet, which could be no match for the ships subject to Jervis's iron discipline and inheriting the efficiency of the *Foudroyant*.* However, on land, the enemy

* For the bad condition of the French navy at this time, see Mahan, 'Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire,' chap. ii. The want of discipline was due, in great measure, to the fact that the doctrine of equality had affected the seamen and petty officers, and the Revolutionary Government

overran Italy, and by the autumn Jervis found himself faced by the combination which had long been threatened, while he had no anchorages left save those in Corsica. He received instructions in September to evacuate Corsica and withdraw from the Mediterranean, and the first part of these orders was sufficiently to his taste. For the rest he was sorely hampered by Man's failure to join him, and after waiting a while at Gibraltar, fell back upon Lisbon. Had he been able to collect his entire force it was his intention to have remained in the Mediterranean, and to have fought the allies, either separately or combined. Though the odds would have been heavy, neither he nor Nelson had any fears for the result ; but when Man's blunder left him with only fourteen sail as against thirty-eight, he was bound to remember that he had no immediate interests there to protect and to let the Mediterranean, for a short space, become a French lake.

England was in a panic. A powerful French fleet lay in Brest, it was known that the Spaniards were coming north to join it, in the hope that now at last the ever-green plan for gaining a temporary supremacy in the Channel might be successful, and all that stood between England and invasion, was Jervis with his fourteen ships. To this it was that the battle of St. Valentine's Day owed its significance. On the day before the battle, Nelson, who had been left behind to arrange the evacuation of Elba, rejoined the flag, bringing with him tidings of the near approach of the Spanish fleet. Jervis had received some small reinforcement, but accident had deprived him of nearly all that he had gained, and on the morning of the 14th his total force amounted to fifteen ships. The Spaniards were sighted at daybreak, but some time elapsed before they were made out to be twenty-seven strong. Jervis's mind had long been made up and his plans laid. A victory was very necessary to England, and towards the achievement of that end he had met his enemy as he himself had hoped to meet him. He had hoped for thick weather or for a meeting at dawn ; actually he was accorded refused support to the captains, the best of whom, as it happened, were by birth noble.

both. As has been said before, Jervis was no original tactician, and was quite content to fight his battle by the rules laid down in the fighting instructions. In the present instance he could do so with a good chance of decisive success, for the enemy's fleet was in great disorder and was divided in very marked fashion into two groups, twenty-one ships in the larger and six to leeward in the smaller division. Jervis formed line and steered for the gap between the two, but three more ships still had time to run down and join the six to leeward. The remaining eighteen were forced by the advance of the English to abandon the nine to leeward, so they hauled to the wind on the opposite tack with the intention of effecting their junction in the wake of the English line. Jervis passed sedately on, and when his leading ship had passed clean through the gap, made the signal to tack in succession in pursuit of the main body. It has often enough been pointed out that this was a tactical error and that it would have given the Spaniards so long a start as to lessen the probability of a decisive result. It was here that Nelson's genius came to his chief's aid. Without orders, he wore out of his position in the rear of the line and threw himself across the course of the Spanish main body which was thus delayed till the English van ships came up. The action at this point was very close. Four ships were taken, while others, thoroughly beaten, managed to escape to leeward with the main body; but the details of the captures belong rather to the story of Nelson's career than to that of Jervis. Jervis had his reward. He had made all strategical dispositions necessary to ensure the meeting, he had brought his fleet into action in a high state of efficiency, and in a traditional manner admirably suited to the conditions of the day. He had thus made the result safe; that the brilliance of that result was enhanced by the action of one of his subordinates does not detract from the credit due to the commander-in-chief.*

When the news reached England the country went wild

* For further details of this battle, see the chapters on Nelson and Troubridge, pp. 302, 338.

with joy, and all joined in heaping honours on the victors. Jervis, for whom a peerage had been in store for his services in 1796, was now gazetted at one step to an earldom, the king himself suggesting the title of St. Vincent. Votes of thanks were passed in both Houses, a pension of £3000 a year was settled on the victor, while the city of London presented him with a sword of honour and its freedom, in which latter respect it was followed by many provincial towns.

Meanwhile, St. Vincent blockaded the remnant of the Spanish fleet in Cadiz. But the main interest of his service passes to other matters. This was the year of mutiny, and the fleet on the Spanish coast did not escape the general contagion. On the ships that had been long with him St. Vincent could rely, but some were comparatively newly joined and the difficulty spread with each accession of force. Noted always for the strictness of his discipline, the admiral now took such additional precautions as seemed necessary, foremost among which was a rigid enforcement of all the ceremonial of naval usage. It was, he knew, no time for conciliation or half measures: mutiny no sooner showed its head than it was dealt with, the disaffection was tracked to its source and the ringleaders were promptly hanged. The climax was reached in the spring of 1798 when a squadron under Sir Roger Curtis joined from the Irish coast. This district was the very hot-bed of treason and the newly joined ships contained many emissaries of the United Irishmen. The worst of these ships was the *Marlborough*, whose officers' grip was slipping from their men, and shortly after she joined the fleet, the mutiny in her came to a head. The ringleader was brought to trial and sentenced to be hanged, in accordance with St. Vincent's invariable practice, on board his own ship and by his own shipmates. The captain of the *Marlborough* came on board the flagship to remonstrate, and stated that if this course were persisted in, he feared an explosion. But the admiral vouchsafed no reply save that if he could not command the *Marlborough*, an officer would be sent on board who could, and the execution was ordered to take place. All possible precautions were taken, armed launches lay alongside

the ship at the appointed hour and the mutineer was duly hanged by the *Marlborough's* men. It was the very crisis of the mutiny, and discipline was preserved. It is needless to enter into the details of other punishments, how a man sentenced on Saturday night was hanged on Sunday morning, or how a petty officer was flogged for not removing his hat quickly enough when the band played "God save the King ;" suffice it to say that the rigid discipline, combined with the strictest care for the real well-being of the seamen had the desired result. The mutiny was stamped out while the fleet kept its position before Cadiz.

Meanwhile it had become necessary to detach a considerable force into the Mediterranean, and the pick of the fleet was sent thither under Nelson, to win undying honour at Aboukir Bay. But Sir John Orde who was Nelson's senior considered himself slighted by the appointment that was made and expressed his opinion to St. Vincent. It was unfortunate for both that the long strain of the mutiny had emphasised all that was harsh in St. Vincent's character. He turned upon Orde and immediately sent him home. Orde complained to the Admiralty and applied for a court-martial, but the Admiralty, though privately censuring St. Vincent's conduct, refused his subordinate's request. The matter, however, did not end till some time afterwards, when a challenge from Orde led to both being bound over to keep the peace, and to an intimation from the king that no duel was to take place.

When the shattered ships from the Nile reached Gibraltar it was currently believed that they were on their way home, but St. Vincent decided that he could not spare them from the station, and gave orders that they were to be refitted where they were. Apart from the strain that was thrown on the resources of Gibraltar, there was the added difficulty that in the ships themselves considerable resentment was shown at the prospect of losing the expected leave. But St. Vincent was not the man to give way, and by an admirable combination of firmness and tact he smoothed away difficulties and carried the work through. His health

at this period suffered, and he asked to be relieved. Lord Keith was sent out to act with him and to relieve him of part of the labour, but the divided command had not good results, St. Vincent's health grew worse, and in June, 1799, he threw up the command.

He spent that winter at Rochetts, an estate he had bought in Essex, and in the spring, his health being somewhat recovered, by particular request, he went afloat in command of the Channel fleet. Here, too, he introduced the severe discipline which had marked his Mediterranean command, and, in view of the obloquy it provoked, it is well to notice that so genial a man as Nelson expressed his doubts whether the fleet could have become efficient under any milder rule. He was considering now not only the discipline but the health of his ship's companies, which left much to be desired ; and if his conduct is to be judged by results, it must be held to have been entirely laudable. From May to September, 1800, the fleet kept station off Brest, and, when it withdrew to Torbay in November, there were only sixteen hospital cases to land. "Of all the services I lay claim to," wrote St. Vincent after his retirement, "the preservation of the health of our fleets is my proudest boast."

In 1801 Pitt resigned and the Addington Ministry was formed. St. Vincent was offered, and accepted, the post of First Lord of the Admiralty, the junior sea-lords being Troubridge and Captain John Markham. St. Vincent knew very well what was before him. The administration of the Navy was hampered by many gross abuses, and he was resolved to make a clean sweep. But the war was still raging, and he had decided that the task could be properly undertaken only in time of peace ; and meanwhile he was compelled to turn his attention to the equipment of the Baltic fleet that eventually broke up the armed neutrality. One difficulty that presented itself at this time was met by the new First Lord in characteristic fashion. The shipwrights of the dockyards, seeing how urgently their services were needed, sent delegates to the Admiralty, threatening a strike if a large advance of pay were not conceded. St. Vincent put the delegates in the

street and immediately sent a commission of inquiry round the dockyards, whence all who had taken a prominent part were dismissed. So the battle of Copenhagen was fought, and following this, the defence of the country had to be organised against the little known and less understood Boulogne flotilla. Adequate preventive measures were taken, but St. Vincent provoked much ignorant obloquy by his steady refusal to spend public money contrary to his judgment, in a way that popular clamour dictated.

In March, 1802, came the peace of Amiens, and the work of reform was begun. Resolved to probe the abuses to the bottom, St. Vincent ordered the resident commissioners of the dockyards to place all books and papers under their private seals, and announced that an Admiralty inspection would take place immediately. "The horror in the dockyards," says Tucker, "was almost pitiable;" and no wonder. The First Lord had long known that jobbery and corruption were rampant, but the mass of iniquity disclosed exceeded even his expectations. As a result of this preliminary investigation the Navy Board was censured and St. Vincent insisted on the appointment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry, which, after considerable opposition, was granted. The reports of this commission, extending over the next two years, showed clearly what an Augæan stable St. Vincent had set himself to clear out.

In 1804 Pitt came back into power and Lord Melville became First Lord of the Admiralty. He had previously been treasurer, and the disclosures of the Royal Commission now implicated him so seriously in the abuses and irregularities that had marked his previous tenure of office that he was impeached. Naturally St. Vincent's efforts resulted in the raising up for himself of a host of personal enemies, but, as it was impossible to charge him with turning them out of lucrative sinecures or with depriving them of unjustifiable perquisites, the attack was based on his policy with regard to the Boulogne flotilla, and Pitt, probably not appreciating the motives that dictated it, became its mouthpiece in the House of Commons. St. Vincent was charged with having

endangered the safety of the kingdom by his refusal to build gunboats, and it was further asserted that he had not built enough ships of the line. A return of shipbuilding was moved for in Parliament, but the motion was negatived, and for a time the matter dropped. However, when Pitt came into power again the attacks were continued, and went on till, papers relating to St. Vincent's administration having been moved for and obtained, the demand was made that a committee of the whole House be appointed to consider them. The papers were read, were answered by St. Vincent's service friends, and the motion was negatived without a division. On this Fox rose and moved that the House do approve the Earl of St. Vincent's late administration, and this was carried, also without a division. Thus ended the public attacks.

The estimation in which St. Vincent was really held, even by his professed enemies, is shown clearly enough by his being requested to take command of the Channel fleet ; but this he indignantly refused to do, unless Pitt should unsay all he had said in the House of Commons. There the matter seemed likely to rest, but Pitt's death settled the difficulty ; and on the request being repeated by Lord Grenville, St. Vincent, in March, 1806, went afloat with the acting rank of Admiral of the Fleet, hoisting the Union at the main of the *Hibernia*. He took over from Cornwallis the duty of blockading Brest, and in the autumn, when a French invasion of Portugal seemed likely, went to Lisbon to concert protective measures. But the French plans were postponed, and the fleet returned off Ushant preparatory to putting into Cawsand Bay for the winter. For some months still St. Vincent's flag flew, he himself by special permission living ashore, but his health was weak, and on the change of Ministry in March, 1807, he applied to be relieved, and a month later struck his flag for the last time.

Practically this ends his public life. For a few years he attended occasionally in the House of Lords, but in 1810 he withdrew finally to Rochetts, where he passed his remaining years, distributing hospitality and giving evidence that the

natural kindliness of his disposition, which had for long been in great measure overlaid by the sternness necessary to his work in the Navy during the critical times through which he served, had lost none of its warmth. The winter of 1818 he spent in the south of France, and, retaining his interest in naval matters to the last, seized this opportunity of visiting Toulon dockyard. On the accession of George IV. he was made Admiral of the Fleet, the honour being the greater because by the custom of the Navy there was only one such appointment, and that was already held by the Duke of Clarence. His wife died childless in 1816, and on his death on the 14th March, 1823, the peerage descended as a Viscounty to Edward Jervis, son of St. Vincent's sister, Mrs. Ricketts. A monument to his memory was erected in St. Paul's Cathedral.



Nelson Bronte

VICE-ADMIRAL HORATIO VISCOUNT NELSON.

XVI.

VICE-ADMIRAL VISCOUNT HORATIO
NELSON.

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EARL NELSON AND
L. G. CARR LAUGHTON.

HORATIO NELSON was born on 29th September, 1758, at Burnham Thorpe, in the county of Norfolk. His father was the Rev. Edmund Nelson, Rector of Burnham Thorpe, his mother Catherine, daughter of Doctor Maurice Suckling, Prebendary of Westminster, and sister of Captain Maurice Suckling, who in April, 1775, became Comptroller of the Navy. The wife of Doctor Suckling was Anne, daughter of Sir Charles Turner, Bart., by Mary, sister of Sir Robert Walpole, K.G., Prime Minister of England and first Earl of Orford.

In October, 1770, news reached England of Spanish aggression in the Falkland Islands. Several ships were at once put in commission, and amongst others the *Raisonnable* of 64 guns, to which Captain Maurice Suckling was appointed. Suckling at once offered to provide for one of his nephews by entering him on board with himself, and the family choice fell on Horatio. He was accordingly entered on the ship's books, as midshipman, on the 27th November, 1770,* though he did not join till the beginning of the new year. When the Spaniards shrank from braving the storm they had raised, many ships were put out of commission. Among these was the *Raisonnable*, and Suckling was appointed to the *Triumph*, guardship in the Medway, to which Nelson

* The exact date is not on record, but this is what Captain Mahan has arrived at by counting back.

followed him. In her he learnt his profession: yet not altogether in her, for he was lent in 1771 to a merchant-ship for a voyage to the West Indies, and in 1773 went for a summer cruise to the Arctic in the *Carcass*. Interest attaches to this early training, for, as he himself tells us, it was in the *Triumph's* tender that he first learnt confidence in pilotage; and it has not inaptly been suggested that his ready sympathy in after life with the foremast men must have had its origin in his experience on board a trading vessel. On 27th October, 1773, he joined the *Seahorse* frigate, Captain George Farmer, as midshipman, and in the following month sailed for the East Indies in the squadron under Sir Edward Hughes. He remained in the *Seahorse* till March, 1776, when, his health having broken down, he was transferred to the *Dolphin* for the passage home. He reached England in good health, and on 26th September of this year was appointed acting lieutenant of the *Worcester*, in which ship he went out to Gibraltar. In the following spring he returned to England, passed his examination on 9th April, and on the 10th was appointed lieutenant of the *Lowestoft*, a 32-gun frigate.

Nelson was throughout fortunate in the captains under whom he served, thanks probably to the Comptroller's interest, and William Locker of the *Seahorse* was no exception. He had served with credit under Hawke, and, being admitted to the admiral's friendship, had profited by his advice and experience. To be under such a man was a great advantage, but the details of Nelson's service at this time show little of moment. To his active mind even a frigate seemed slow, and he managed to be sent away in the *Lowestoft's* tender, in which he learnt the pilotage of the north side of Hispaniola. It is well to insist on this taste for ticklish navigation, for to it we owe the glory of the Nile and of Copenhagen. In July, 1778, he was moved into the *Bristol*, flagship of Sir Peter Parker, by whom he was promoted, on 8th December following, to command the *Badger* brig, and again, six months later, to be captain of the *Hinchinbroke* frigate. After a successful cruise in her he was appointed, in January, 1780, to convoy a small military expedition which

was fitting out at Jamaica for the San Juan river, its object being to seize the fortified posts on the river and on Lake Nicaragua, and thus to sever Spanish communications on the isthmus. Nelson landed with a party of seamen and marines to help the soldiers in ascending the river, and, till they came before Fort San Juan, all went well. The military commander, respecting the strength of the position, decided to invest it, although Nelson advised that it should be carried by assault. Many men might fall in an assault, but the expedition had been late in starting, the sickly wet season was at hand, and, so Nelson saw intuitively, delay would be far more dangerous. Yet, though his advice was not followed, he set himself with ready zeal to do what he could in the circumstances; and the work was heavy. He boarded an outpost of the enemy on an island, planted a battery and worked it with excellent effect. But he was recalled to Jamaica, a day before the fort fell, by his appointment to the 44-gun ship *Famus*. The recall saved his life, but even so he was for long most dangerously ill with fever and dysentery, by which diseases the expedition was shortly forced to abandon its conquests.

In September he was able to take a passage for England in the *Lion*, whose captain was William Cornwallis, and on his landing at Portsmouth went straight to Bath to recruit. It was not till the summer of 1781 that his health was re-established, and in August he accepted the command of the 28-gun frigate *Albemarle*. In the *Albemarle* Nelson gained his first experience of Danish waters in a trip to Elsinore on convoy duty, after which the ship was sent to Canada and the St. Lawrence. The main interest of his somewhat uneventful cruising in those northern seas lay in his severe experience of scurvy. He was a man who always profited by his experiences, and the present instance bore fruit a hundred-fold later on in the splendid health of the fleet with which he maintained the blockade of Toulon. From Quebec the *Albemarle* was sent to New York, where Nelson became acquainted with Lord Hood, and with Prince William Henry, who was then a midshipman.* When Hood presently

* See above, p. 252.

sailed for the West Indies he took with him the *Albemarle*, of whose captain he had formed a high opinion. But there was little to be done and the fleet was ordered home. When the *Albemarle* was paid off the whole ship's company volunteered to enter for any ship to which Nelson might be appointed, but instead of applying for a ship at that time he went for a while to France. Seemingly it was his intention to make a lengthened stay abroad, but, owing, it is said, to his having been rejected by an English lady to whom he paid his addresses at St. Omer, he abruptly returned to England in January, 1784, after a stay of three months. He applied at once for employment, and on 19th March was appointed to the *Boreas*, a 28-gun frigate, then under orders for the Leeward Islands. In May she sailed, Lady Hughes, the wife of the commander-in-chief on the station, being on board, and the captain's brother William being her chaplain.

Under most men the cruising of the *Boreas* would have been uneventful, but Nelson made the commission memorable enough. A new difficulty had arisen on the station since the peace. The Americans, in gaining their independence, had, in accordance with the Navigation Acts, forfeited their right to trade with the islands: but as the trade was extremely lucrative, and as the islanders for the most part sympathised with the United States, the trade was still carried on more or less openly. Nelson readily saw the harm that was being done to English commerce, and appealed to Sir Richard Hughes for leave to stop the illegal traffic. This was at first granted, but afterwards, in virtue of an opinion given by the king's attorney-general for the islands, was withdrawn. Legally the order was invalid, and therefore Nelson set it aside and suppressed the American trade on his own responsibility. It was a most daring action on his part, but one which, coming from a young and almost unknown man, was not likely to find favour with official opinion. Undoubtedly much good came of it. So much good in fact that the Treasury was led to compliment the commander-in-chief on the work of the squadron. But this bestowal of the praise on the man whose easy-going tendency to leave

ill alone had hampered his efforts was not the only bitterness that fell to Nelson's share; not only was no special notice taken of his service, but he was for years much harassed by lawsuits brought against him by colonists who had suffered by his zeal. Meanwhile, as though one scrape with the admiral were not enough, Nelson had angered Sir Richard Hughes on other grounds. He had refused to take orders from the commissioner at Antigua, who was, by Hughes's leave, flying a broad pennant. The commissioner was a captain on half-pay, and as such was merely a civil officer and could have no executive rank. Nelson therefore was again wholly in the right, and Hughes entirely in the wrong. But the disobedience earned a rebuke from Whitehall. A pleasant feature in the case is that there was no breach in the friendly relations between Nelson and the commissioner and his wife. But these instances exhibit to a remarkable degree traits of character which were illustrated again and again in Nelson's career, his impatience of wrong and his utter fearlessness of responsibility. But the risk he ran was so great that, looking backward in cold blood, we shudder to think how near England was to losing so supreme an officer.

At this time Nelson married. The lady was Mrs. Nisbett, a young widow and niece of the President of Nevis. Prince William Henry, who gave the bride away at the marriage on the 12th March, 1787, remarked, what Nelson himself had noticed, that the bond of attachment between the young couple was rather that of esteem than of the more violent passion of love. Happy auguries were drawn from the circumstance, but unfortunately they were not too well justified in the sequel. In the summer of this year the *Boreas* returned to England, and during the autumn Nelson was employed in her on impress service. On the 30th November she was paid off, and for five years Nelson remained on half-pay. During this period he resided chiefly at Burnham Thorpe, but he was often in London on business connected with the illegal trade at the islands, concerning which he gave the Government much useful information. But the comparative inactivity was irksome to his restless and energetic disposition, and he was continually

in hopes of being actively employed. His wish was denied him till the 26th January, 1793, when, war with France being inevitable, he was appointed to the 64-gun ship *Agamemnon*. It was the turning-point of his life. Unknown hitherto outside the Navy, and with a somewhat troublesome reputation at head-quarters, he rose almost instantly to a fame which has reached to the ends of the earth.

The *Agamemnon*, like every other ship that Nelson commanded, was a "happy ship." Nelson began by expressing his belief that he was peculiarly fortunate in his officers and men; they in their turn took care to justify his opinion. He had said the same thing when in the *Albemarle*, yet the fact stands that few of the officers trained under him rose to distinction. The truth seems to be that Nelson's zeal and energy were of a contagious order, and, coupled with his unwearying kindness and justice, could transform an ordinary crew into one of exceptional merit.

The *Agamemnon* was one of the ships that went out to the Mediterranean with Hood in the summer, and, from the time of his arrival at Gibraltar in July, 1793, Nelson was very fully employed.* The fleet was engaged first in blockading Toulon, and, on its surrender, the *Agamemnon* was sent to Naples to seek troops to help in the occupation. On his return from this service Nelson was again detached, being sent to join Commodore Linzee at Cagliari, and thus saw nothing of the recapture of Toulon by the troops of the Convention or of the horrors that ensued. Linzee effected nothing, but, while on her way to join him, the *Agamemnon* fell in on the coast of Corsica with a squadron of French frigates. A sharp action ensued and they, superior force though they were, were glad to escape and take refuge in Corsican ports. Indirectly Nelson had a great share in their capture, for being still in Corsica when it was reduced in the following year, they then passed into English hands. In November Nelson was sent in command of a frigate squadron on the Corsican and Italian coasts, charged with the protection of trade and the blockade of Genoa. But this was not for long, as early in

* For these operations, see the chapter on Lord Hood, pp. 266-270.

1794 Hood collected his forces for the reduction of Corsica. The French withdrew to Bastia, and the general in command of the English troops decided that their position was too strong for him to attack. Nelson thought otherwise, and offered to make the attempt with the *Agamemnon* and 500 men. Hood, finding Nelson's advice backed by certain soldier officers, and having himself a high opinion of the giver, decided to risk it. A party of marines and seamen was put on shore, the Corsicans supplied the moral effect on the land side, and on the 24th May the garrison of 4500 men marched out. Nelson and his *Agamemnons* had a great share in the success; they landed guns, dragged them into position and then worked them. When Bastia fell it remained to take Calvi, and a similar course was pursued with similar results, the surrender taking place on the 10th August. Again there was much hard work, and again the bulk of it fell on the seamen, who made and manned the batteries. Nelson and Captain Ben Hallowell relieved each other in command of these guns, and it was in the advanced battery that Nelson was wounded on the 12th July, when a shot which struck the parapet drove some grit into his face with force sufficient to destroy the sight of one eye.

Following the reduction of Corsica Nelson was sent again to Genoa after refreshing for a short time at Leghorn. At this time Lord Hood returned to England, leaving Vice-Admiral Hotham in what was supposed to be temporary command. The change was distasteful to Nelson, who found in his new chief vacillation and dread of responsibility. Hood did not come out again, and the estimate formed of Hotham's capacity was justified by the events of the year. On the 12th March, 1795, the English found themselves in the presence of the French Toulon fleet, which was to windward. Partly by the superior sailing of his ship, partly owing to his talent for being where he could be of most use, Nelson was on the morning of the 13th nearest to the enemy. Though the fleets were of about equal force, the action that followed was never more than partial; indeed on the 13th the *Agamemnon* was the only ship of the line engaged. When the French 80-gun ship *Ça Ira* carried away her topmasts, Nelson, by virtue of

his position to windward of the rest of the pursuing ships, was able to engage her, and this he did, hanging on to her in the face of the French fleet and skilfully avoiding her superior broadsides. When the enemy bore down in force to her support, Hotham recalled the *Agamemnon*, and Nelson left her. Nothing more could be done that day, but the enemy were hampered by having a lame duck to protect, and by this circumstance were compelled to fight again on the 14th. The wind was patchy and light, but the *C₃a Ira* and the *Censeur*, 74, which had her in tow, were cut off from their friends, and taken after a stout resistance. The *Agamemnon* was briskly engaged, but as regards Nelson the day was not particularly memorable. The enemy were content to lose the two ships, and Hotham was disposed to consider the advantage gained sufficient. Here we get a very characteristic glimpse of Nelson's mettle. As soon as the firing ceased he went on board the flagship and urged that the prizes and crippled English ships should be left, and that the main body should crowd sail in pursuit. But, in Nelson's words "he, much cooler than myself, said, 'We must be contented, we have done very well.' Now had we taken ten sail and had allowed the eleventh to escape when it had been possible to have got at her, I could never have called it well done." By the light of what Nelson subsequently achieved we can appreciate the tremendous force of these words.

Following this, things in the Mediterranean went on in a leisurely fashion. Reinforcements from Brest were allowed to reach Toulon, and ships were sent out from England to restore Hotham's equality. On the 4th July Nelson was once more detached, to co-operate with the Austrians in the Riviera. He fell in with the French fleet, which Hotham did not know was at sea, and it chased him back to San Fiorenzo, being ignorant in its turn that the British fleet lay there. The French made sail away, and it was not till the 13th that the English came up with them off the Hyères Islands. There was little wind, time was wasted in manœuvring, the enemy continued to stand in for the land, and, after a scrambling distant fire, by which they lost one ship, anchored at night.

Hotham drew off without making any further attempt, but had Nelson been in command there can be no doubt that he would have anchored with the enemy.

Nelson now had a more severe experience of semi-diplomatic service on the coast of Genoa. It was active and anxious work with the inadequate force put at his disposal, and he was glad when Sir John Jervis came out in December to relieve Hotham. With the occupation of the Riviera by the French his work on that coast ended, and he joined the admiral on the 19th January, 1796. It was their first meeting, and Nelson was well pleased with his reception. Jervis immediately detached him with a small force to prevent the passage of French troops to Italy by sea, and he continued arduously employed on the coast from Toulon to Leghorn during the spring of 1796. Meanwhile Nelson was ordered to wear a distinguishing pennant, and the old *Agamemnon* being by now very crazy he moved into the *Captain*, 74, on the 11th June.

At this time it was expected that Spain would join with France, and in view of the marked inferiority the English fleet would then be in, all waited anxiously to see what would be done. On the 5th October Spain declared war, raising the hostile fleets to 38 sail. Corsica was judged untenable and was evacuated, but Jervis determined that the fleet should remain, using Elba as its base. But when, by an unfortunate blunder on the part of Rear-admiral Man, the available English force was reduced to 14 ships, Jervis felt compelled to fall back on Gibraltar. There he received orders to withdraw the garrison from Elba, and Nelson was sent on this service in the frigate *Minerve* with the *Blanche* in company.

On their way from Gibraltar they fell in, on the 19th December, with two Spanish frigates, both of which were made to strike. The *Minerve* took possession of the *Sabina*, but in the morning of the 20th was chased by two ships of the line. One of them gained, and the *Minerve* would have been in great danger had not Lieutenant Hardy in the prize flaunted English colours over Spanish. The leading ship turned aside after the *Sabina*, and Nelson got clear. He

proceeded to Elba, found the military governor unwilling to move without positive orders, and sailed to rejoin the fleet. At Gibraltar he received Hardy in an exchange of prisoners, and sailing thence on the 11th February, 1797, was immediately able to repay the debt of gratitude he owed him. Hardy having been lowered in the *Minerve's* jolly-boat to pick up a man, was in imminent danger of being taken by two Spanish ships-of-the-line which were closely pursuing the frigate. Nelson took a great risk. He checked the *Minerve's* way and picked up Hardy. The very daring of the action deceived the pursuers, who, imagining that Nelson must have English ships in sight, hauled their wind. On the 12th Nelson passed through the Spanish fleet, and on the 13th joined the admiral off Cape St. Vincent with news of its approach. He at once moved back into the *Captain*.

St. Valentine's Day broke hazy with a westerly wind; the enemy, 27 ships strong, were in a straggling line to windward, Jervis had with him only 15. There was a marked gap in the Spanish fleet, and through this Jervis passed in line ahead, thus cutting off to leeward one-third of the enemy's force. The action in its main bearings belongs to Jervis's career, but a most notable incident of it hall-marked Nelson's growing fame.

The English and the main body of the Spaniards passed on opposite tacks, the enemy wishing to join his lee division in the wake of the English line. As the leading English ships drew clear the fleet was waiting anxiously for the next move. Nelson, who was in the rear of the line, expected that the order would be to tack together. But the signal was made to tack in succession. With the lightning perception of genius he saw that this would result in the junction of the severed fleet and that the victory would be rendered incomplete. Therefore he wore out of the line unsupported, without orders, and threw himself with his single ship across the line of the Spanish advance. Though Jervis ordered the rearmost ship to tack to his support, and though the leading ships presently came up, he was for a considerable time unaided. The *Captain* was reduced to a wreck, but the object was achieved and the

Spanish van hauled its wind. Two ships struck, and, as the tide of battle passed on, it left others hopelessly beaten, among them the *San Nicolas*, of 84 guns, and the *San Josef*, of 112. The *Captain* was useless in the chase, and intuitively Nelson saw that he would be well employed in taking possession of these two ships, which might otherwise escape, as other beaten ships actually did. The merit of the action has been popularly misunderstood. It does not depend on a display of valour—there were plenty of brave men in the Navy,—it depends rather on power to grasp conditions with a promptitude which then, as in a more daring manner earlier in the day, rose to genius.

Nelson's reception by the admiral after the fight was all that he could wish, nor was the country lacking in gratitude. The battle had ended an intolerable period of suspense, and honours were heaped on the victors. Nelson received from the City of London its freedom and a sword of honour, from Norwich its freedom, and from the king the Knight-hood of the Bath. Also, by the accident of his seniority, six days after the battle he became Rear-Admiral of the Blue.*

The Spanish fleet was shut up in Cadiz, and Nelson took part in the blockade. He was now in the *Theseus*, a ship that was strongly suspected of being imbued with a mutinous spirit. It is therefore a pleasant task to have to recall how, shortly after he had joined her, a round-robin was dropped on the quarterdeck, in which the ship's company swore to be loyal to Nelson and Miller, the captain of the ship. It was a purely spontaneous outbreak, and, considering the mutinous state of the fleet at the time, emphasises very clearly the difference between Nelson and St. Vincent. Both of course were right, but though we may admire the stern determination and fortitude of St. Vincent, it is more agreeable to dwell on the love which the sympathetic disposition of Nelson inspired. Yet there was in him no undue leniency. It was simply that his nature acted as a preventive and rendered unnecessary the stern cures that the commander-in-chief had to practise.

* For further details of this battle, see the chapters on Lord St. Vincent and Sir T. Troubridge, pp. 285, 286, 338, 339.

In his own words, he used a penknife where St. Vincent took a hatchet.*

Nelson had proposed an attack on Santa Cruz de Tenerife, and when the opportunity offered he was sent with a small squadron to deliver it, though not in the manner he originally contemplated. He had wished for the co-operation of troops, but such could not be given to him, and he sailed with three ships of the line and as many frigates. His landing party was small, and it was decided to attack on the night of the 24th July. The plans were carefully laid, Nelson giving his personal attention to matters of the minutest detail, but the darkness and a heavy surf made success impossible. The boats were scattered, many were stove in, and, to add to the misfortunes, Nelson when in the act of landing was severely wounded in the right elbow by a grape shot, and had to be taken back to the ship. Daylight showed the presence of an overwhelming Spanish force, but those who had made good their landing showed a bold front, in virtue of which they were allowed to withdraw unmolested. The loss of life was severe, and this, added to the pain of his amputated arm, brought much anguish of mind to Nelson. But he bore the misfortune manfully, and truly it may be said of him, as he himself said of Lord Hood, "He was equally great in all situations which an admiral can be placed in." †

Nelson went home at once and went to Bath, where Lady Nelson was, to recruit. For long he suffered intense pain from his wound, but early in 1798 was ready again for service, and on the 10th April sailed in the *Vanguard*, 74, to rejoin St. Vincent, Berry being his flag-captain.

There was no British force in the Mediterranean, and the French were known to be fitting out an expedition at Toulon. Nelson was therefore sent with three ships-of-the-line and three frigates to find out what its objective might be. It was believed that it would either make an attempt upon Naples, or sail for Ireland, but, as Nelson reported, secrecy was well maintained. On the 18th May a gale blew the

* Compare p. 287.

† For criticism of this unsuccessful attempt, see pp. 340, 341.

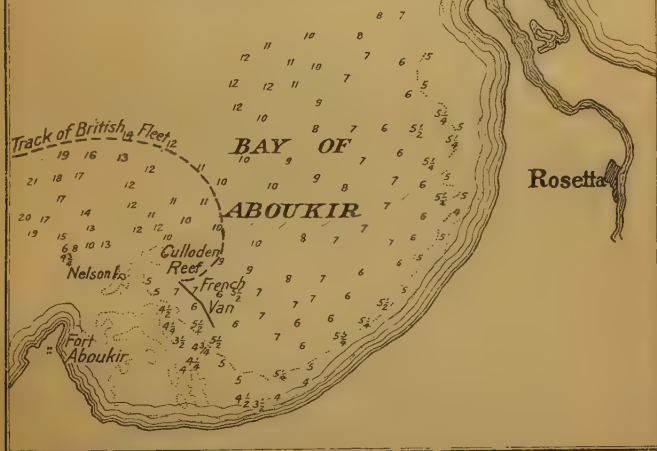
division from before Toulon and dismasted the *Vanguard*. The frigates returned to Gibraltar, believing the *Vanguard* would have to come there to refit, but, by great exertions, she was jury-rigged in Sardinia, and on the 1st June was agian off Toulon. But the French had gone. Meanwhile St. Vincent was advised from home to send a detached squadron up the Mediterranean, and it was suggested that Nelson would be a good man to command it. Nelson was already there, so Troubridge was sent to join him with ten 74's and the *Leander*, 50. He also bore certain instructions changing Nelson's position from one of observation to active pursuit. Further he was to stay as long as provisions lasted, or—what is important—as long as he could obtain them, using force if necessary. Nelson went first to Naples and there learnt that the ports were authorized to supply him with refreshments at his need. From Naples he pushed on to Malta, which the French were attacking, but Malta had fallen and the enemy was gone. He had before this, from his own knowledge of conditions, come to the conclusion that the real aim of the Toulon fleet, which had with it a large army, was Egypt, and to Egypt he went. To his amazement there was no news of any French fleet, so after coasting along Syria he returned to Syracuse, where in the face of some official opposition he took in victuals and water. The strain on Nelson at this time was very great. He was most anxious about the harm the French might do, he was convinced that Egypt, and by way of Egypt, India was their object, yet he could not account for the disappearance of so vast a fleet. Really the French fleet had gone to Egypt, and Nelson, by a strange chance which the want of frigates made possible, had passed them at sea and had reached Alexandria before them. But this of course he could not know at that time. On the 25th July he left Syracuse and three days later learnt that the French had been seen, four weeks earlier, shaping their course for Egypt. He at once made sail for Alexandria, and there on the 1st August the transports were seen. In the afternoon the French fleet, thirteen sail of the line and four heavy frigates, were made out at anchor in Aboukir

Bay. Nelson had thirteen 74's and a 50-gun ship, so that in numbers the fleets were nearly equal. In size however the French had the advantage, their flagship being *L'Orient*, a first-rate of 120 guns, but as the event proved this was more than neutralised by superior skill and efficiency.

Nelson resolved to attack at once, though this entailed a night action. There was nothing to delay him, he was certain of his captains, who were all men in the prime of life with splendid war service, and his plans had long been matured for meeting the enemy under any possible conditions. The French fleet was anchored in a line with the wind, their van being protected by a battery. They were close in shore, and, judging by the whole history of sea fights, held their position to be secure. We are much too prone now to think that what Nelson did was the natural thing to do, but we must remember that it was first by his glorious example in this battle that the terrible insecurity of such a position was exposed.* Nelson was not, as some have believed, a mere random fighter, he was a consummate tactician, and his victories were rendered complete by a marvellous skill far more rare and valuable than any display of bravery. It was seen that it was possible, though risky, for English ships to get inside the French line, which was therefore attacked on both sides. The van only received attention at first; when that was destroyed the tide of battle rolled on towards the French rear. Nelson's own description of his tactics was, "By attacking the enemy's van and centre, the wind blowing directly along their line, I was enabled to throw what fire I pleased on a few ships." In fact, a reference to the plan of the battle will show that five British ships, Captain Foley leading in the *Goliath*, anchored on the inner side of the five French ships in the van, while the *Vanguard* (Nelson's flagship) and two others anchored on the outer side. Hence, as Captain Mahan remarks, "Five French seventy-fours were thus in hot action with eight British of the same size, half an hour after the first British gun was fired, and only five hours from the time Brueys first knew

* For Captain Mahan's interesting and valuable comparison of the position of Lord Hood's fleet at St. Kitts and that of the French fleet at Aboukir, see above, p. 296.

PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF
ABOUKIR GIVING THE POSITIONS
OF THE FLEETS, AFTER MAHAN'S
PLAN OF THE BATTLE



[To face p. 306.]

that the enemy were near." And as darkness was setting in, there ensued a similar concentrated attack on the French centre. Two ships of the line and two frigates only escaped, and had not the *Culloden*, by the misfortune of running aground, been debarred from taking part in the fight the result would have been even more complete. As it was, there was no pursuit, for no English ships were in a fit state; but the two ships of the line were accounted for soon afterwards. It was the most splendid and complete victory on record, and the receipt of the news was greeted with vast enthusiasm. Nelson was raised to the peerage as Baron Nelson of the Nile and Burnham Thorpe, a pension of £2000 a year was voted to him and his two next heirs, Parliament passed a vote of thanks to him and to the officers and men of the fleet, the City of London subscribed £200 for a sword of honour, medals were struck, and foreign powers vied with each other in honouring the victor.

On the 22nd September Nelson reached Naples, where he was greeted by an outburst of intense enthusiasm. The leading spirit of the festivities was Lady Hamilton, wife of Sir William Hamilton, the English representative at that Court, a woman of extraordinary beauty, whose antecedents are too well known to need mention here. The enthusiasm of the Court was real enough, for Naples had been subject to long anxiety which was now relieved, but it may be doubted whether it was not in great part by vanity and her theatrical disposition that Lady Hamilton was led to attach herself to the victor. Nelson was well pleased with the incense she burnt at his shrine, and from this period dates the unhappy attachment that lasted till his death. Some rigid moralists have gone on to add that his infatuation even led him to neglect of duty. It did not. There is no shadow of truth in the assertion, and instances could be multiplied to prove that, where the choice lay between love and duty, he chose ever the latter. As for instance when, in 1803, Lady Hamilton proposed joining him with Horatia in the Mediterranean, he refused to violate his own orders by taking her to sea in his flagship; or again, when he peremptorily declined to dismiss Dr. Beattie and appoint a *protégé* of hers as his surgeon.

These are small examples, but they go far to show that in his dealings during the summer of 1799, and indeed at all other times, Nelson was swayed by his duty only. It is true, of course, that he detained a force at Naples, but he did so because he honestly believed it to be necessary there: and indeed, there was no more important duty to which it could have been put.

When the advance of the French, and the rout of the Neapolitan army, frightened the Court, Nelson took the king and his retinue on board ship and moved to Palermo, where the Court was established for the next few months. Naples was occupied, and, owing to the dispersal of the squadron on various duties, it was not till March that a sufficient force could be collected to act for its recovery. In May, when the fall of Naples seemed imminent, Nelson heard that the Brest fleet had got out and was likely to make an attempt on Minorca. He at once collected the bulk of his fleet to meet it, leaving only a small force off Naples; but shortly, learning that Sicily might be its aim, he modified his plans, and a little later, when new information tended to show that Bruix might be expected at Naples, he returned thither. He then learnt that an armistice had been concluded with the rebels, and had led to a capitulation. No officer on the spot had power to do this; Nelson was commander-in-chief of the Neapolitan navy, and he denounced the treating with rebels as infamous. The capitulation had not begun to take effect, and he annulled it. It was made very clear to the rebels that it was annulled, and they surrendered to the king's mercy. His action was perfectly fair and above-board, and those who have impeached his memory on this score have been misled by the lies of the Italian Jacobins. Nelson had nothing to do with the executions that followed, save one. This one was Caracciolo, formerly a captain in the Neapolitan navy, who had taken service with the rebels. Caracciolo was duly tried by officers of his own service on board a Neapolitan ship, and was duly hanged at her yardarm. Here again there has been misrepresentation, but it is enough to recall that there was practically no defence, and that Caracciolo himself took no exception to the court by which he was tried.

Meanwhile Lord Keith had been sent out as commander-in-chief in place of Lord St. Vincent. Nelson was much hurt that the command had not been given to him, and seems to have been predisposed to back his own opinion when occasion arose. Occasion did arise regarding the disposition of the fleet, Keith believing Minorca to be the point to be protected, Nelson maintaining that Sicily and Naples were threatened, and refusing to send his ships west. It was a question as to whose opinions concerning Mediterranean politics and conditions were worth most, and Nelson, whose experience of that sea was far in advance of Keith's, can hardly be blamed for feeling that his own views were more valuable. As a matter of fact, however, the French fleet did nothing, but, granting that an attack had been impending, he was right in supposing the kingdom of the Two Sicilies more important than Minorca. None the less the disobedience was sufficiently flagrant to draw a rebuke from the Admiralty, though, as he was at the same time appointed commander-in-chief during Keith's absence, it cannot be said that he was severely treated. It is not the most pleasant topic to dwell on, but although we cannot acquit Nelson of all blame it is well to consider how far the Admiralty was at fault in sending out a man so vastly inferior to Nelson as commander-in-chief.

In August of this year Nelson was made Duke of Bronte in Sicily. Shortly afterwards the *Généreux* and *Guillaume Tell* were taken separately, the former by Nelson himself, the latter by Berry in the flagship. Nelson had been ordered to destroy the Toulon fleet; now it was done. He felt that his work was completed, and he wished to be at home, With him mind and body always sympathised; his mind was ill at ease, so his health suffered. He laid down his command, and, after making a tour through Europe in company with the Hamiltons, landed at Yarmouth November 6th, 1800.

As was perhaps inevitable, Nelson was coldly received by his wife. They lived together very unhappily for the next few months, but in January, 1801, agreed to separate, Lady Nelson receiving a yearly sum of £1800, which her husband could ill afford. But he was always most generous, especially to his

own family, as many instances prove ; such, for example, as his payment in March, 1804, of his brother's widow's debts. On the 17th January Nelson, who had become a Vice-Admiral on New Year's Day, hoisted his flag in the *San Josef*, and was away in her when Horatia was born. She is reputed to have been the child of Nelson by Lady Hamilton, but of this there is no proof. It is a sorry question to argue upon, but this much is certain, that Nelson believed what Lady Hamilton told him, and took her to his heart as his daughter.

Lord Spencer left the Admiralty at this period, but one of his last acts was to appoint Sir Hyde Parker to command the fleet going up the Baltic to break up the "Armed Neutrality." Lord St. Vincent succeeded him, and appointed Nelson second in command. He would have placed him in chief command had not the other unlucky appointment been made, so that it was really by chance that Nelson again went out as a subordinate.

Sir Hyde was a weak commander though an amiable man, but he had at least the merit of appreciating his subordinate. Nelson proposed two courses ; the more daring to push on and attack Russia, the head and fount of the coalition, the other to attack Copenhagen from the south. Sir Hyde chose the latter, but at the last moment, dreading the difficulties of the navigation, shunned the attack. On this Nelson offered to deliver it with ten of the smallest ships, and Parker gave him twelve. Nelson was favoured by a fair wind, and on the 1st April, after sounding the channel, passed to an anchorage south of the town. On the morning of the 2nd the wind was fair for him to pass north to the attack. The approaches had been sounded during the night, Nelson giving this work his personal attention ; all was ready and the advance was made. The Danish floating batteries were moored close in shore, additional guns had been placed wherever possible, and to the north was the great castle of the Three Crowns, to avoid which the fleet had passed south out of range. Three of the ships grounded on the shoal that lies off the town, and were rendered comparatively ineffective. The work was harder for the rest, and the firing was for

long very heavy, the more so as the Danes could, and did, frequently reinforce their ships from the shore. For hard, downright fighting it was the warmest Nelson had known, and he from his position in the *Elephant* abreast the Danish commodore had good experience of it. The battle raged from ten till two before the result became apparent, a fact which easily explains how Parker came to make his famous signal. By half-past two the floating batteries were shambles, some were drifting helplessly, the flagship was in flames. The fight was now mere butchery, and to stop this Nelson sent to the Crown Prince a letter which led first to a truce, and then to the armistice whereby Denmark was detached from the confederation.

After the battle Parker kept the fleet inactive, and on the 17th April news was received from England of the death of the Tsar Paul and the opening of negotiations with Russia. Still Parker did nothing, and four days later he was recalled. St. Vincent had become convinced that Nelson's energy was needed to direct matters, and Nelson was appointed commander-in-chief. He at once decided that if the Reval fleet had not got up to Cronstadt the negotiations would progress none the worse for his having it at his mercy. He went therefore to Reval at once, but it was too late: the fleet was gone, the Russians were able to protest against the presence of so large a force, and he accordingly withdrew. His health was again weak, so he threw up the command and returned home. For the victory he was raised to the rank of viscount, and in common with the fleet received the thanks of Parliament: but no medal was issued, an omission which Nelson resented in the seamen's behalf.

In this summer there was a scare of an invasion from Boulogne and the Flemish ports, and Nelson was at once asked to take up the command of a large force of frigates and small craft destined to prevent it. It was a command independent of the admiral in the Downs, and that there was no friction argues much for the zeal and tact of both commanders. When Nelson came to look into the matter he found that the much-vaunted scheme was hopeless, and that French preparations had been vastly exaggerated. Accurate scouting

confirmed him in his view, and by the middle of August he had decided to punish the French for their insolence. He wished to be ashore again before the equinoctial gales, which he said would prostrate him. Accordingly on the night of the 15th August an attempt was made by four divisions of boats on the small craft at Boulogne. It was beaten off with loss; and indeed success may be said to have been impossible, so securely were the French boats fastened to each other and to the shore, and so swept were their decks with musketry. As after Santa Cruz, Nelson's character shone in misfortune. It was nobody's fault but his, he alone planned the attack. All that men could do had been done, but success was out of reach. In addition to this generosity of spirit he showed an intention to try again and formed plans, but preliminaries of peace prevented any further attempt. However, the Government was not in too great a hurry to disarm, and Nelson was kept afloat longer than he desired, a thing which raised his anger.

When Nelson obtained leave of absence on the 22nd October he went at once to Merton in Surrey, where he had commissioned Lady Hamilton to buy a country seat for him. Here or at Sir William Hamilton's house in Piccadilly he spent his time till he sailed to take up the blockade of Toulon. On the 26th April, 1802, Nelson's father died, and on the 6th April, 1803, Sir William Hamilton, with whom Nelson had, by an arrangement sufficiently strange in the circumstances, been sharing housekeeping expenses. To the last Hamilton shut his eyes to Nelson's relations with his wife, and though he had had altercations with her they were not on this account. From this time Nelson's mind seems to have been more at ease, possibly because the death of Hamilton removed one of the greatest obstacles to his marrying Lady Hamilton, a thing he always vowed to do so soon as opportunity should offer. But his love for Lady Hamilton never banished his love for his own relations, and it is curious to note that both at this time and during his short period ashore before Trafalgar his house was always full of his brothers and sisters and their children.

On the 20th May, 1803, he sailed for Toulon with his flag

in the *Victory*. Of all blockades the blockade of Toulon was the most arduous. It was distant, and it was rarely that reliefs and supplies reached the fleet from home ; and as the fleet there was well out of the popular sight it was found convenient to send to it the least seaworthy of the ships employed in that service. It is immensely to the credit of Nelson that he maintained for eighteen months the most stringent military blockade with a force that frequently fell below that of the enemy, and that at the end of it his crews were more healthy than they had been at its beginning. For himself he never set foot out of the ship, and the health of the men was not secured by relaxation ashore. The result was gained by the admiral's constant care never to miss an opportunity of getting fresh provisions and vegetables, especially lemons and onions, and by his knowledge that much illness is due to stagnation of mind. With this in view he encouraged all such amusements as were possible, and he never harried the men with needless work, though the fleet was carefully maintained at a high standard of efficiency.

Yet all this time Nelson maintained that there was no blockade. Really he was quibbling with the meaning of the word. It is true that there was nothing actually to prevent the French from coming out, but there was the certainty that they would be brought to action immediately they were well clear. On the 19th January, 1805, Nelson was at Maddalena when he heard the French had sailed with a strong north-westerly wind. For long he had believed that their destination would be Ireland or the West Indies, but of late he had concluded that Egypt, or possibly Naples, was their aim. He made sure that Naples was safe, then it rested in his mind that they had either gone to Egypt or put back disabled. In the latter case they were already accounted for, so to Egypt he went. They were not there, and he learnt at Malta on his way back that they were at Toulon, disabled, as he had expected.

Before he got back to Toulon he heard that they were again at sea, and accordingly placed his look-out ships so as to ensure that they could not pass east unknown. Though no sign of them appeared the wind was easterly, and he would

not run to leeward without information. Thus it was the 9th April before he made up his mind that they must have gone west, and then the wind came foul, so that, though he learned on the 18th that they left the Mediterranean, it was not till the 6th May that he was at Gibraltar. The wind came easterly, he became convinced that they were bound for the West Indies, and on the 11th May he started in pursuit. With his foul and crazy ships he gained twelve days on the enemy, and the news of his arrival so impressed Villeneuve that he at once made up his mind to sail for England. Villeneuve's presence in the West Indies was due to a Napoleonic scheme whereby all the blockaded French squadrons should simultaneously break out, to rendezvous at Martinique. Thence they were to return and sweep the Channel, after which the army of invasion would cross over. But pretty as the plan may have looked on paper, it failed from the first, because the squadrons did not come up to expectations in breaking out, because Nelson did not go to Egypt the third time as was hoped, and chiefly because he dogged Villeneuve to the West Indies, and back again. Nelson steered for the Straits, knowing that if the French had passed he would there hear of them. When he reached Cadiz there was no news, so he turned north for Ferrol, where he hoped they would be. But the information which Nelson sent by the *Curieux* from the West Indies had resulted in the meeting between Sir Robert Calder and the Toulon fleet off Finisterre on the 22nd July, after which Villeneuve, somewhat shattered and very sickly, had put into Vigo, whence, Ferrol being now forbidden, he made shift to get into Corunna. Nelson went north and joined Cornwallis off Brest on the 15th August. From Brest he went home. On the 18th he struck his flag and started for Merton. His stay was short. Villeneuve was ordered to join Ganteaume, who was in Brest, but he understood that in the face of the great fleet off that port it would be impossible. He did not wish to meet that fleet, and when, being on his way north, he saw three English ships, he was only too ready to believe that they formed part of it. He therefore turned south, and anchored at Cadiz August 17th.

News of this reached England on the 1st September, and on the 2nd Nelson heard it. It was already arranged that Nelson should resume the command, and on the 13th September he left home for the last time. On the 15th the *Victory* sailed from Portsmouth, and joined the ships with Collingwood off Cadiz on the 28th.

Many thought that another long blockade was just beginning, but Nelson was confident that he would soon have his foe at sea. Though he did not know it, Napoleon had ordered Villeneuve to take his fleet round to Toulon, being ignorant that it was doomed to destruction if it showed outside. Villeneuve knew, but by threats was driven out. He chose the most favourable opportunity when he knew Rear-Admiral Louis and six ships to be absent at Gibraltar for provisions, and began to unmoor on the 19th October. By the afternoon of the 20th he was at sea with thirty-three ships, French and Spanish, while Nelson had with him twenty-seven. Nelson had long said that the 21st October was the lucky day in his family, referring to a gallant action fought on that date by his uncle Captain Maurice Suckling; he was now about to make it far more memorable.

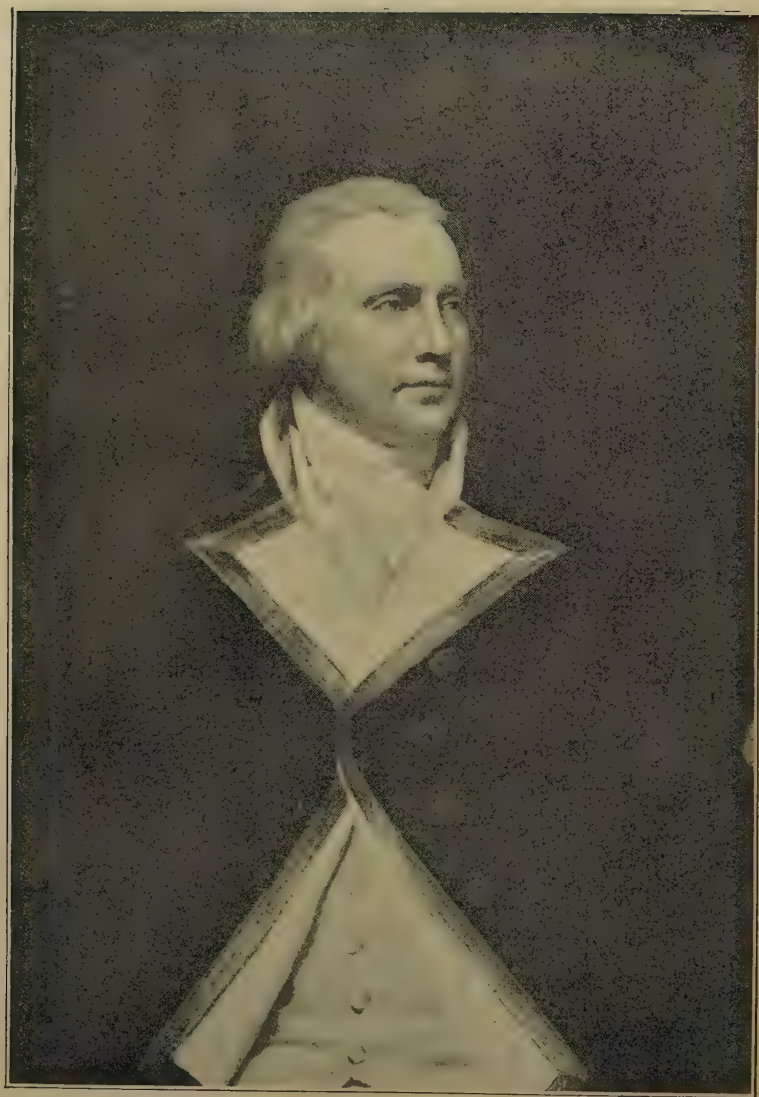
It is unnecessary here to attempt any detail of this well-known battle: it will be enough to call attention once more to what was Nelson's own peculiar part, the method in which the attack was delivered. We have his notes and plans of attack carefully prepared beforehand, and communicated to all his captains, so that we can speak with certainty. He had decided that with a fleet so large as that which he was now handling much valuable time would be wasted in an attempt to form the conventional line. Therefore he had decided that the order of sailing should be the order of battle. One difference only was made from the written plan. Whereas he had intended to attack in two columns of line abreast, he found at the last minute that the extreme lightness of the wind enforced a modification. The attack was accordingly made in two columns of line ahead, Nelson and Collingwood leading the columns.* It was not so perfect a

* It should be stated that the view adopted by the writers of this chapter is

plan, for it subjected the leading ships to a great concentration of fire before they could make any effective reply, but it was as thoroughly successful as the original plan would have been in making it easy to mass ships on the enemy's centre and rear, leaving the van untouched and for long unable to help. As Nelson had anticipated, the battle was won before the van could interfere. Eighteen ships were taken or destroyed, while most of the rest were accounted for within the next few days. But in the thick of the fight Nelson fell, mortally wounded, and lived but long enough to learn that the victory was complete.

The joy with which the news was received was tempered by this great loss, for Nelson had, in winning the love of the fleet, won the love of the whole country. Such honour as could be paid to his memory was paid—a splendid public funeral, pensions for his family, and an earldom for his brother. We honour his name to-day, and can perhaps more truly appreciate the meaning of his great work. But was there sadness in his end? Never was man's life-work more glorious; and he died in the perfection and completion of duty, which throughout had been his guiding light.

open to question, and has been disputed on high authority. Not long ago Admiral Colomb wrote a very strong article in the UNITED SERVICE MAGAZINE (September, 1899) to show that Nelson's orders of the 9th October were *not* altered in the battle of the 21st, and that the two columns *did* follow "lines of bearing" and not "lines ahead." He holds that the ordinarily received view destroys Nelson's character as a tactician, and can be disproved by the evidence which we have. *Inter alia* he cites Collingwood's despatch: "As the mode of our attack had been previously determined on, and communicated to the flag officers and captains, few signals were necessary, and none were made except to direct close order as the lines bore down. The Commander-in-chief in the *Victory* led the weather column, and the *Royal Sovereign*, which bore my flag, the lee. The action began at twelve o'clock by the leading ships of the column breaking through the enemy's line, the Commander-in-chief about the tenth ship from the van, the second in command about the twelfth from the rear, leaving the van of the enemy unoccupied; *the succeeding ships breaking through in all parts astern of their leaders*, and engaging the enemy at the muzzles of their guns." To this Admiral Colomb adds, "Evidently this is but a paraphrase of Nelson's memorandum of October 9th. Collingwood was quite unaware that he or any one else in the fleet had departed from the principles there laid down. . . . It is clear from Nelson's order that he intended to bear down upon the enemy's line with his own two lines almost parallel to each other and to it. All the histories and diagrams make him go down in two lines that were nearly at right angles to the enemy's line."



EDWARD PELLEW, VISCOUNT EXMOUTH, G.C.B.

From a Family Portrait. By John Opie, R.A., 1796.

XVII.

ADMIRAL THE VISCOUNT
EXMOUTH.

BY FLEETWOOD HUGO PELLEW.

THE registers of the little old parish church of Milor, in Cornwall, tell us that the grandfather of the famous Lord Exmouth, Captain Humphrey Pellew, died there in 1722, and that his father, Samuel, was born there in 1712. Left an orphan at eight years of age, Edward Pellew, second son of this Samuel, entered the Navy in 1770, when he was only thirteen, and quickly rose to distinction. He was a remarkably strong and active boy, generous and truthful, and utterly fearless. Before 1775 he had already distinguished himself by jumping into the water from the *Blonde* frigate's yard-arm as she was going fast through the water, and saving the life of a man who had fallen overboard. How often he saved the drowning during his career is unknown, but the occasions were very numerous. One of them is narrated by Lady Hardy, widow of Nelson's Hardy, and is characteristic. The captains of Lord St. Vincent's fleet were dining together on Hardy's ship, Pellew amongst them, when a boy rushed in with horror on his face, but uttering only inarticulate stutters. Sir Edward Pellew (for he had by that time been made a baronet), perceiving that the boy was a stammerer, turned to him and said gently, "Sing it, boy, sing it," and the boy at once, in the singing key used by sailors on duty, chaunted out, "The cook is overboard, and cannot swim." All rushed on deck to try and get a boat out—all but Pellew, whose voice, a moment after, was heard under the taffrail: "The

cook is all right ; send us a rope." He had jumped out of the cabin window, and caught the cook as he was drifting underwater astern with the tide.

But his greatest act of this kind was when the *Dutton* transport, with 500 troops and women and children, was wrecked in front of Plymouth Citadel in January, 1796. Sir Edward and Lady Pellew were engaged to dine with Dr. Hawker, the Vicar of Charles. On arriving, the host met them at the carriage door with news of the wreck. Whilst he was talking, Sir Edward slipped out by the opposite door, and ran down the half mile to the Hoe. There he found an excited crowd, and the wreck swaying and crashing on the rocks beneath. What followed had best be told in the words of J. Northcote, in a letter dated two days after : "We have had a terrible succession of stormy weather of late. Thursday, immediately after dinner, I went to the Hoe to see the *Dutton*, East Indiaman, full of troops, upon the rocks, directly under the citadel. You cannot conceive anything so horrible as the appearance of things altogether which I beheld when I first arrived on the spot. The ship had struck on sunken rocks, somewhat inclining to one side, and without masts or bowsprit standing, and her decks covered with soldiers as thick as they could possibly stand by one another, with the sea breaking in a horrible manner all around them. I observed with some admiration the behaviour of a captain of a man-of-war, who seemed interested in the highest degree for the safety of these poor wretches. He exerted himself uncommonly, and directed others what to do on shore, and endeavoured in vain with a large speaking-trumpet to make himself heard by those on board, but finding that nothing could be heard but the roaring of the sea, he offered anybody five guineas instantly who would suffer himself to be drawn on board with instructions to them what to do : and when he found that nobody would accept his offer, he gave an instance of the highest heroism, for he fixed the rope about himself, and gave the signal to be drawn on board. He had his uniform coat on and his sword by his side. I have not room to describe the particulars, but there was something grand and interesting in

the thing, for as soon as they had pulled him into the wreck he was received with three vast cheers by the people on board, and these were immediately echoed by those who lined the shore, the garrison walls and lower batteries. The first thing he did was to rig out two other ropes like the first, which I saw him most active in doing with his own hands. This quickened the matter a great deal, and by this time two large open row-boats were arrived from the dockyard, and a sloop had with difficulty worked out from Plymouth pool. He then became active in getting out the women and sick, who were with difficulty got into the open boats, and by them carried off to the sloop, which kept off for fear of being stove against the ship, or thrown upon the rocks. He suffered but one boat to approach the ship at a time, and stood with his drawn sword to prevent too many rushing into the boats. After he had seen all the people out of the ship to about ten or fifteen, he fixed himself to the rope as before, and was drawn on shore, where he was received again with shouts. Upon my inquiring who this gallant officer was, I was informed it was Sir Edward Pellew."

Of his strength and activity there are many tales. Osler tells how, in 1786, on the Newfoundland station in a bitter gale, when the men hesitated to man the yard, he slipped over their backs without their knowing it, and encouraged them to save the sail from the end of the yard, where he had got no one knew how. At the back of the Red Lion in Truro they still show an iron gate under an archway, over which he is said to have jumped to assist at a fire, though it seems almost incredible, so small is the space between the points of the rails and the soffit of the arch. But the following anecdote told by Admiral Schank, under whom Pellew was working at the construction of a flotilla to meet the Americans on Lake Champlain, is new and authentic. The *Inflexible*, of 300 tons, was built in twenty-eight days. On the day she was launched, Pellew, on the top of the sheers, was trying to get in the mainmast. The machinery not being of the best, gave way, and down came mainmast, Pellew, and all, into the lake. "Poor Pellew," exclaimed Schank, "he is gone at last!" Not so,

however; he speedily emerged, and was the first man to mount the sheers again. "Sir," the dear old man (Admiral Schank) used to conclude, "he was like a squirrel."

It was on Lake Champlain that he first distinguished himself as a fighting officer against the Americans under Arnold. In the action of the 11th October, 1776, he was third officer of the *Carleton* schooner, which, being the leading ship, got hotly engaged, when the wind suddenly failed. The commodore could only send artillery boats to support her, and soon after signalled her recall. Meantime both senior officers had been disabled, and half the crew. In going about, under hot fire from the contiguous shore, the *Carleton* hung in stays, with her bows towards the land, and Pellew, now in command, went calmly on to the bowsprit and pushed the jib over. The boats now took her in tow, but a shot cut the tow-rope, and Pellew, seeing all hesitate—for indeed it appeared a death service—ran forward and secured it himself. The *Carleton* thus regained the squadron, but not before she, with the boats, had sunk the *Boston* gondola, and burnt the *Royal Savage*, of 12 guns, the largest of the enemy's schooners.

Pellew's conduct had been conspicuous, and was the admiration of the whole squadron. He received letters of thanks from Sir C. Douglas, the senior officer at Quebec, and from Lord Howe, Commander-in-chief on the station, and lastly—an unprecedented honour for a midshipman—from the First Lord of the Admiralty himself, with a promise of promotion. Retaining command of the *Carleton*, next year he was appointed to lead the naval brigade which accompanied General Burgoyne's expedition. We may pass over his services in the advance to Saratoga. On the 7th October, Burgoyne fought his second battle at Still Water. He was defeated, and among many others Pellew's younger brother John, aide-de-camp to General Phillips, was killed. The troops, already much distressed for provisions, fell back on Saratoga. Meantime the enemy took the vessel which contained all the provisions of the army, when Pellew, at the head of his sailors, retook it. Of this feat an officer of Burgoyne's army told Mr. Grimes, Lord Exmouth's secretary, that he saw Pellew retake

the *Victualler*. In towing it out under fire the tow-rope was cut by a shot, when Pellew swam to the vessel with the rope in his mouth and refixed it. General Burgoyne wrote as follows: "It was with infinite pleasure that General Phillips and myself observed the gallantry and address with which you conducted your attack on the provision vessel in the hands of the enemy, . . . and I send you my sincere thanks, together with those of the Army, for the important service you have rendered them." Pellew was only twenty, and still a midshipman when he did this great service, but the service was useless; Burgoyne was hemmed in, his men were starving and he was compelled to surrender. Pellew was sent to England with the despatches. On his way home as a passenger in a transport a privateer attacked. Major Foy, commanding the troops, was assuming command, but Pellew asserted his right as senior naval officer, took command, and beat off the privateer.

In 1779 he was lieutenant of the *Licorne*, and was commended for his conduct in an action with a cruiser. In April, 1780, he was made first lieutenant of the *Apollo*, Captain Pownoll (an old friend). On June 15th the *Apollo* engaged the French frigate *Stanislaus*. At the commencement of the action Pownoll was shot through the body. He said, "Pellew, I know you won't give his Majesty's ship away," and died. Pellew took command and beat the enemy. For this he received another letter from the First Lord promising to make him a captain.

In 1782 he commanded the *Pelican*, a small and rickety frigate. He sailed in her April 20th, and took a privateer the next morning, with which he returned to port. On the next day, 29th, he sailed again, met three privateers, attacked them and drove them all on shore, and was again thanked by the First Lord and made a post-captain.

As no ship was available, Pellew had to wait. But in June Captain Macbride, of the *Artois*, 40 guns, was wanted on special duty, and Pellew was put in temporary command of her. He wasted no time, for on June 22nd he captured a frigate. Then came the peace, in January, 1783, upon which he married and took to farming his brother's ancestral property of Treverry in St. Martin's in Meneage, not far from

the Lizard. Tired of this, he came to Flushing, on the Cornish coast, to be near his eldest brother Samuel, collector of customs at Falmouth, with whom he went after Wellard, the famous smuggler, and fought and captured him.

The moment war was declared with France, on the 3rd February, 1793, Pellew was appointed to the *Nymphé*, of 36 guns. But she had no crew; every ship was being manned, and sailors were scarce, so he manned her with Cornish miners. In the Channel was the famous French commodore, Captain Mullon, of the *Cleopatra*, 36 guns, which, as the leader of four other frigates, had been cruising more than a year in the Channel and had already taken 50 British merchantmen. By June Pellew was ready, and on the 17th his younger brother Israel, who had not yet been given a ship, joined him as a volunteer. Next morning they found the *Cleopatra*, which waited for them with three great caps of liberty screwed on the trucks of her masts. For forty minutes they fought yard-arm to yard-arm, when the *Cleopatra*, losing her wheel and mizzen-mast, became unmanageable and got foul of the *Nymphé*. Pellew seized the opportunity and boarded, and the *Cleopatra* was won—the first trophy of the war. There was great excitement. George III. announced the news himself from his box at the opera amid wild enthusiasm, sent for both the brothers, knighted Edward, and made Israel, who, by shooting away the wheel and mizzen-mast, had secured the victory, a post-captain.

In January, 1794, Sir Edward was appointed to the *Arethusa*, which formed part of a squadron of five frigates under Sir John B. Warren. On April 23rd they met a French squadron of four frigates, beat them and took three. Warren wrote, "I shall ever hold myself indebted and under infinite obligations to you for the gallant and noble support you gave me to-day. God bless you and all yours." In fact, he had gone to the rescue of Warren's frigate, the *Flora*, then in distress, and captured her opponent, the *Pomone*, the most powerful frigate then in existence. In October, 1794, the Admiralty resolved to form two squadrons, and gave Sir Edward Pellew the command of the new one. Before the

end of the month the squadron had captured the *Revolutionnaire*, 40 guns, a vessel only inferior to the *Pomone*. In January, 1795, he was given the *Indefatigable*, 44 guns. This ship, like the *Anson* and *Magnanime*, was an old 64-gun ship cut down. None of the three could sail. Pellew refused to take the *Indefatigable* unless her rig was altered in accordance with his views. In this Lord Spencer, the First Lord, supported him against the Navy Board. At length he got his way, and the *Indefatigable* was made to sail like a yacht. It was in this ship in 1796 that, in the absence of the blockading squadron, he so harried the French fleet carrying General Hoche and 15,000 troops, as they were coming out of Brest by night to invade Ireland, as to drive one 74-gun ship on the rocks and to separate them in such wise that they never again united, and the invasion failed. It was in this ship, again, that a month later he, along with Captain Reynolds of the *Amazon*, attacked the last French line-of-battle ship, *Droits de l'Homme*, on her way home from the Irish coast, in a heavy gale, fought her doggedly for eleven hours, and finally left her a dismasted wreck thirty-five miles south of Brest, on the rocks in Audierne Bay—an action unparalleled in British naval annals. It was in the same ship that he pursued, caught, and captured, after a fourteen hours' chase, the *Virginie*, commanded by the distinguished Captain Bergeret, and one of the finest and fastest frigates in the French navy. Besides these trophies, the squadron, of which the *Indefatigable* was the flagship, captured two other fine French frigates and a crowd of privateers, and swept the seas of such depredators. One of these captures, the corvette *Vaillante*, was bound to Cayenne with 24 priests in chains, whom he released and treated with great kindness. Years afterwards a friend visiting Mr. Weld's establishment for French Trappists during the service in the chapel, heard the name Sir Edward Pellew distinctly pronounced. Inquiring the cause, the priests informed him that they prayed daily for Sir Edward Pellew as "their saviour and restorer to liberty and life." *

* The story of the release, of Sir Edward's generous conduct, and of the sequel is told in *L'Eclairneur Marseillais* for August, 1815.

Early in 1797, and only a few weeks after the action with the French line-of-battle ship, the mutiny broke out at Spithead. The Channel fleet was rendered useless for the time, and Warren's and Pellew's frigate squadrons became the protectors of the whole Channel. Then the French fitted out another armament for the invasion of Ireland, and Sir Edward's squadron was again employed to watch the harbour of Brest. So closely did he lie off the port that the French admiral was obliged to place a portion of his line-of-battle ships at single anchor in Bertheaume Road, outside the harbour, which repeatedly chased them without being able to bring them to action or drive them from their station.

It was whilst in command of the *Indefatigable* that Sir Edward Pellew went out to the rescue of the first battalion of Grenadiers wrecked in the *Dutton*, as described above. For this, and to "form a more public testimony of the sense his Majesty entertains of your general good conduct and ability in his service," he was created a baronet; but his cruising days were now over, for he was appointed to the *Impetueux*, a line-of-battle ship, to serve with the Channel fleet under Lord Bridport. The mutiny had by this time been smoothed over, not put down, and the crew of the *Impetueux* were deeply infected. The fleet lay idle, twenty-six in number, in Bantry Bay, expecting the French invasion. There a plot was concerted for a general rising, the *Impetueux* to lead. It would take too long to describe the mutiny and how firmly and quietly it was quelled without bloodshed, and the ringleaders secured. The fleet, disconcerted at its failure, sailed obediently to the Mediterranean to reinforce Lord St. Vincent. There the mutineers were condemned and executed, and Lord St. Vincent afterwards said to Sir Edward's eldest brother, "Your brother is an excellent and valuable officer, but the greatest service he ever rendered his country was saving the British fleet in Bantry Bay. We know that it was their intention to burn the ships and join the rebels on shore."

By the year 1800 the *Impetueux* had returned to the Channel and Lord St. Vincent had succeeded Lord Bridport.*

* See above, p. 289.

Sir Edward, though not one of his "school" and though St. Vincent looked with suspicion on all the captains of Lord Bridport's fleet, had already gained his complete confidence. On June 1st, Sir Edward was detached with seven sail-of-the-line, to land an expedition in Quiberon Bay, and on the 26th, when the work was done, wrote as follows: "The disposition made by Sir Edward Pellew for the descent is the most masterly I ever saw. Although the naval command in Quiberon may appear too important for a captain, I shall not divest him of it, unless ordered to do so, feeling a thorough conviction that no man in his Majesty's Navy, be his rank ever so high, will fill it so well."

Acting on this conviction, Lord St. Vincent kept Sir Edward in command of the squadron cruising off St. Louis, and though some of the captains were senior, and for a time somewhat jealous, they soon acknowledged his superior claims. In August he was placed under his old commander, Sir J. Warren, with a large force of troops in transports to reduce Ferrol. The disembarkation was confided to Sir Edward, who, after silencing the forts, landed 8000 troops and 16 field-pieces in a few hours without a man getting wet. The troops, with the help of the sailors, gained the heights which commanded the defences, but the general decided that the place was too strong, and unexpectedly asked to be at once re-embarked. The same evening every man was safe and dry on board his transport.

Sir Edward was deeply chagrined. He was sure that the place could have been taken, and he pointed out to the Admiralty the immense strategic importance of its capture. The peace of Amiens soon followed, but Ferrol was the strategic point of the next war.

In May, 1803, when war was again declared, nine French line-of-battle ships were on their way from the West Indies. These took refuge in Ferrol, now ostensibly a neutral port, as Spain had not joined in the war, and Sir Edward Pellew, still a captain and not even given the rank of commodore, was ordered, with five sail-of-the-line, to blockade them. There throughout a winter of exceptionally violent gales, this

little squadron rode off the port and kept the enemy in. At length Sir Edward, exploring the coast for days in a cutter, discovered a secure anchorage in Betanços Bay, completely commanding the exit from Ferrol, in which during the worst weather they could take refuge. In the spring, however, the Admiralty, hearing that the French were preparing an expedition to join the Dutch fleet in the Indian seas and overpower the British force there, recalled Sir Edward, and making him an admiral, appointed him Commander-in-Chief in India. Thus he was deprived of the chance, which fell to Admiral Calder, of fighting the French in a general action.

Of his command in India it only needs to be said that in a very short time he annihilated the Dutch force, thus preventing any fear of a junction with the French; and by establishing an excellent system of convoy, and, in time, by the extirpation of French cruisers and privateers, rendered the local commerce as secure as in peace time. One interesting incident may be recorded. Bergeret, the brave and talented captain of the *Virginie*, had been taken prisoner in 1796 by Sir Edward, who entertained him in his own house. But the conduct of the French, who confined Sir Sidney Smith in a dungeon, compelled the British Government in reprisal to remove Bergeret to Stapleton prison. On Sir Sidney Smith's escape he was generously released; but the French Government refused him a ship, and he went to the Isle of France and fitted out a privateer. Disdaining to command her himself, he entrusted her to a captain who preyed successfully on English trade. At length the Governor bought her for the National Marine, and made Bergeret her captain. Bergeret had cruised with still greater success for some months before Sir Edward's arrival, but was soon after taken, and brought again a prisoner to Sir Edward's ship. The two friends met, and it is hard to say which was most affected.

On his return from India, Sir Edward, after a year's command in the North Sea, was selected to succeed Collingwood in command of the Mediterranean fleet. Trafalgar had been fought, and all chance of a general action was over, Italy was

writhing under the heel of Napoleon, but Sicily was under the protection of the British fleet, and Wellington had just fought the battle of Fuentes D'Onoro. To co-operate with Wellington, to assist the Catalonians, to stop all French supplies by sea, to encourage Italian patriots, to support Lord William Bentinck in Sicily, to keep the Mediterranean an English lake, to correspond with his own Government as well as those of all the Powers of Europe, and all the while to blockade and endeavour to bring to action the still powerful Toulon fleet,—such were his duties, and he performed them to perfection. Lord Wellington was not easy to please, but he never has a word for Sir Edward but praise and gratitude. Captain Chanier wrote, “The Mediterranean fleet, the finest England ever possessed. The credit is due to Lord Exmouth. That fleet was above all others in point of order and activity.” As for Lord William Bentinck, he looked on him as a father. Of the innumerable actions fought upon the coasts scarcely one failed, and in all the loss of life was trifling. He finished his command in the Mediterranean by the capture of Genoa, by the rescue of Marseilles for the Royalists, and by forcing the pirate governments of Tunis and Tripoli to abolish the practice of Christian slavery. With orders from Sicily, Naples, and Sardinia, in gratitude for many subjects rescued from the Moors, with a peerage as Baron Exmouth from his own Government, and a magnificent testimonial from the whole fleet, he sailed for England in May, 1816.

On his way home he had been ordered to call at Algiers and demand certain privileges. But Lord Exmouth, indignant, like Nelson and many other great sailors, that England, having the power to stop it, should so long have permitted the disgraceful system of enslaving Christian prisoners of war to continue, and having already, without instructions, obtained its abolition from the two minor Powers, determined, though still without instructions, to press the point strenuously with the Dey. The Dey at first curtly refused, and war seemed imminent, but when Lord Exmouth moved his ships up he so far yielded as to offer to send to Constantinople for sanction to negotiations on the subject.

Lord Exmouth, satisfied for the present, returned to England to report his proceedings and urge upon the Government the necessity of firmness. He was supported by the Prince Regent and by public opinion ; and at this moment came the news that a number of Italians (British subjects for the time) had been massacred at Bona. The Government no longer hesitated. They resolved on an expedition to demand satisfaction for the massacre and the total abolition of Christian slavery for ever, appointed Lord Exmouth to command, and gave him the force and equipment he required.

Algiers was defended by over 500 guns, facing east. From the centre of its face runs due east a pier about 400 yards long, and at the end of this a mole parallel to the shore, so as to form a figure like a T with a very long top, or cross, enclosing two harbours. Where the cross joins the shank was the lighthouse battery of 60 guns in three tiers, dominating everything, and the whole mole was armed with batteries of two and three tiers pointing east. At each end of the mole were very powerful batteries pointing respectively north and south. The harbour to the north was shallow, that to the south was deep, and the ships of war lay there. Along the coast were many other batteries, especially to the south, in which direction they continued for a mile. The guns were 42, 32, 24, and 18 pounders. The mole was 1500 yards long, and defended altogether by about 200 guns. Lord Exmouth calculated that four line-of-battle ships, anchored close in to the east face of the southern half of the mole, would be exposed to the fire of 90 guns only, and might, by superior gunnery, silence the east face, whilst completely protected by the mole itself from the batteries on the coast and partially from the lighthouse battery. At the same time a fifth ship might rake the mole from the southern end. But inasmuch as this last ship would necessarily be exposed to the coast batteries from the pier southward, he designed to place two heavy frigates to oppose the fire of those batteries. Meanwhile the harbour and shipping, as well as the town, was to be bombarded from boats placed in rear of the ships.

Accordingly he asked for and obtained the *Queen Charlotte*

(flagship), 100 guns—a new and powerful ship—the *Impregnable*, 98 guns, and three 74's, with three heavy and two light frigates and a number of gunboats, and sailed for Algiers. Before going he left with Mr. Croker (the Admiralty secretary) a note to the effect that, as he might fall, he desired to state Government had made every provision he considered necessary, and that, consequently, any failure must be attributed to some other cause than the neglect of Government. On the way out the crews were trained daily at broadside and target firing, till their expertness became remarkable and their confidence unbounded. On August 27th, arriving off Algiers, Lord Exmouth sent in an ultimatum at 11 A.M. demanding a reply within two hours. At 2 P.M. the boat returned without an answer. By this time the fleet was lying a mile from the shore. The *Queen Charlotte* asked by signal if all were ready, and immediately every ship answered "Yes." The fleet at once bore up, the *Queen Charlotte* leading, followed by the *Superb*, *Impregnable*, *Minden*, and *Albion*, with the frigates in a second line, outside. At 2.35 P.M. the *Queen Charlotte* anchored with springs fifty yards from the batteries at the south end of the mole. The Algerines then fired three guns, the sound of the last of which was, as Ostler says, "drowned in the thunder of the *Queen Charlotte's* broadside." Meanwhile the *Superb* anchored a full cable's length astern of the flagship instead of close in to her, and the *Impregnable* altogether out of her station, right opposite the great lighthouse battery, and four hundred yards away from the face of the mole, so that two other heavy batteries could enfilade her. The *Minden* and *Albion*, however, which should have been astern of her, passed on and took up stations as close as possible astern of the *Superb*, thus doing their best to retrieve the mistake, but they were too far from the batteries to avoid some enfilading fire.

The frigates all took up their positions to perfection, the *Leander*, 50 guns, just ahead of the flagship, firing into the harbour and on the shipping and town. Ahead of the *Leander* was the *Severn*, 40 guns, and ahead of her the *Glasgow*, 40 guns, both firing on the town batteries,

whilst the little *Granicus* (Captain Wise), seeing the gap between the *Queen Charlotte* and the *Superb*, filled it up as if she had been a ship of the line.

Except, therefore, that a small frigate occupied the position which a heavy line-of-battle ship should have filled, Lord Exmouth's plan was carried out very much as he intended. From 2.35 till 10 P.M. a fire of unexampled rapidity was kept up without intermission, by which time all the batteries on the mole (except that at the north end, but including the light-house battery), as well as all the batteries on the pier and sea face of the town south of the pier, were in ruins, and all but a few guns silenced, all the Algerine fleet destroyed, and all the storehouses and the arsenal in flames. Then, the land wind springing up, the fleet cut cables, set sail, and anchored out of range. Next morning the Dey surrendered unconditionally, and by the 3rd September Lord Exmouth was able to send in his frigates to their homes 1200 rescued slaves subjects of every court in Europe.

The loss was severe, 128 killed, and 690 wounded, and of these 50 killed and 160 wounded belonged to the *Impregnable*. What was the cause of the premature anchoring of the *Impregnable* is unknown. No reason is given in the public despatches, and in the completeness of the success no one was disposed to be critical. But it was the cause of much loss of life, and might have jeopardised the battle.

Lord Exmouth returned to receive a viscountcy, the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, and autograph letters from every monarch in Europe, including the Pope, conveying to him their thanks and numerous high orders for the service he had rendered. It was a proud day for England when she thus took up her responsibility as the commanding power in the Mediterranean, and many a Greek or Italian sailor, for many a year after, has blessed the name of Lord Exmouth.

Of Lord Exmouth's private character it is unnecessary to say more. As a frigate captain he is admitted to have been unsurpassed. At Quiberon, Ferrol, Batavia, and Algiers, he showed consummate powers of organisation. At the last place especially his plan was a masterpiece of boldness and

originality in what seemed to the best naval experts of that day an almost hopeless enterprise. Had it been perfectly carried out there would have been less loss, but the success could hardly have been more complete. Still, it is to be regretted that he was not allowed to humble the Dey with his magnificent Mediterranean fleet instead of a new squadron, hastily got together a bare month before the action, and with officers who had never before served under him. It was his misfortune never to have fought or commanded in a general action. Once he was very near it. On November 5th, 1813, the French fleet sailed out of Toulon, with the wind at E.S.E., to manœuvre and return, when the wind veered round to N.W. But they had not got out far enough, and were able to work back before they could be cut off. To the day of his death it was his one regret that he never fought the French fleet, but the action of which he was most proud was the saving of the crew of the *Dutton*.

XVIII.

ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS TROUBRIDGE.

BY COMMANDER TROUBRIDGE, R.N.

SIR THOMAS TROUBRIDGE was born in the parish of St. Mary-le-bone, London, in the year 1758.

His great-grandfather, Andrew Troubridge, was established there in business at the close of the sixteenth century, and dying in 1712 was buried in St. Mary-le-bone churchyard. He left a son, John, who, dying in 1756, was buried beside his father, and left an only son Richard, the father of the subject of this memoir.

His first entry in the Royal Navy was on the 8th October, 1773, on board the *Seahorse* frigate, then fitting out for the East Indies, and commanded by Captain George Farmer, whose name was destined to become famous for his splendid action, and glorious death in the *Quebec*.

Troubridge was, in accordance with the custom of those days, entered as an Able Seaman, and on the 21st March, 1774, rated Midshipman.

It was on board the *Seahorse* that he found himself mess-mate with young Horatio Nelson, and the firm friendship then contracted lasted to the end of their lives.

The first few years of the commission were uneventful, the capture of the *Sartine* French frigate, in presence of the fleet, being the only incident worthy of record. It has been said that in this action Troubridge's conduct was such as to bring him prominently into notice, but the story rests on no authentic foundation.



T. Troubridge

ADMIRAL SIR THOMAS TROUBRIDGE.

On the 13th May, 1870, he was moved into the *Superbe* flagship of Sir Edward Hughes the Commander-in-Chief on the station, and was on the 1st January, 1781, promoted to Lieutenant in the *Chaser* sloop, and on the 3rd March of the same year transferred to his old ship the *Seahorse*.

February 15th of the eventful year of 1782 found the *Seahorse* quietly anchored in Madras Roads, forming part of Sir Edward Hughes' fleet, the main body of which consisted of nine battleships. Early on that day the topsails of some large ships were seen on the horizon. They were soon made out to be a French fleet, which under the redoubtable Bailli de Suffren, had, after an eventful voyage, arrived in India to contest with us the possession of the peninsula.

On the 17th February took place the first of the five bloody combats between the opposing forces.

Space forbids a detailed description of these actions, in all of which Troubridge bore a part, and in which Sir Edward Hughes, an aged officer of an old school, without perhaps genius, but possessed of a dogged perseverance, and well supported by loyal and capable captains, measured swords with Suffren, the most gifted and energetic officer in France, whose fleet was indeed superior in numbers but whose commanders were, with few exceptions, disloyal and ignorant.

The battle of Madras on the 17th February was followed by the still more severe action of the 12th April, a memorable day in the annals of our Navy. In this action the losses on our side amounted to no less than 567 killed and wounded.

On the day following, Troubridge was again transferred to the *Superbe*, and for the week after the battle the rival fleets refitted, only two miles apart. Suffren, the first to be ready, next challenged Hughes, who, more dilatory, was not prepared to fight, and Suffren accordingly sailed for Trincomalee. Returning on the 5th July, he found Hughes at Cuddalore, and compelled him to weigh and give battle. Another bloody combat ensued with severe losses on both sides.

Again after this battle was Hughes satisfied with a long refit, and paid the penalty of his inaction in the loss of Trincomalee, which surrendered to his more active adversary.

A severe action fought on the 3rd September, after its fall, in which Hughes inflicted great damage to the enemy's fleet, was but a poor compensation for the loss of that magnificent harbour.

We had suffered severely in officers in these battles, no less than six captains having been killed, so that after that of the 3rd September, Troubridge found himself the senior Lieutenant of the flagship, and in the month following was promoted Commander into the *Lizard* sloop, and on the 1st January, 1783, posted, and appointed to command the *Active* frigate.

In this ship he took part in Hughes' fifth and last action with Suffren on the 20th June, 1783, off Cuddalore, after which battle he was transferred to the command of the *Sultan*, in which ship Hughes had now hoisted his Flag.

The news that peace had been concluded between the two countries now reached India, and Suffren returned to France. The *Sultan* with Hughes and Troubridge sailed the following year, arriving in England early in 1785.

The very decisive results of the sea fights, during the wars that followed the outbreak of the French Revolution, compared with those of the period just recounted, may fairly be traced to the lessons learnt during that period by the young officers, destined later to command. One can readily gather from Troubridge's subsequent career what maxims he laid to heart for future guidance.

The best sea officers, generally speaking, are those who have been trained in fleet work, for they have the advantage of being able to make comparisons, and besides learning what to do in every circumstance, gather equally well what not to do.

Troubridge had seen the immense advantage enjoyed by an active opponent who could make bricks without straw sacrifice frigates to fit out line-of-battle ships, and with no base of his own, come up to time, as it were, while our own people, in friendly ports, and with infinitely greater resources, were only thinking about it.

On the other hand, he had seen an Admiral of no great

capacity, but commanding a fleet in which every Captain was not only a perfect seaman, but eager to show his loyalty to his chief, and to fight to the last drop of his blood, hold his own against the greatest of French Admirals, infinitely more energetic, clever and resourceful, but commanding a fleet torn with dissensions and jealousies—surely the germ which afterwards developed into the famous “band of brothers” of the Nile.

In December, 1787, Troubridge married, his wife being the widow of Henry Richardson, Governor of one of our colonies, and daughter of Captain John Northall and Dorothy Rumbold his wife. By her he had three children, twin daughters born in November, 1788, and a son born in October, 1790; and from 1785 to 1790 he enjoyed the quiet of half-pay at Upton House, near Romsey in Hampshire, where he had settled.

In the latter year he was appointed to the command of the *Thames* frigate, in which he sailed for his old station, the East Indies. It was a time of profound peace, and nothing of interest occurred during this voyage, which terminated in 1792, in which year he returned home and paid her off.

In the year 1793 war was again declared between Great Britain and France, and Troubridge was appointed to the command of the *Castor* frigate. Ordered early in 1794 to convoy the trade to Newfoundland; the ships were becalmed off Cape Clear in Ireland on the 13th May and had the misfortune to fall in with a squadron of the French fleet, under M. de Nielly, and were captured.

Great must have been Troubridge's mortification to be thus disposed of at the very commencement of the war. However, had he only known it, it was to be the means of raising him to the high position he subsequently attained; for immediately after the capture of the *Castor* M. de Nielly received orders to join the Flag of Admiral de Villaret Joyeuse, who with a large fleet had left Brest, to cover the return of the American trading fleet bound for France.

Lord Howe, also with a large fleet, was on the look out for Villaret Joyeuse, and on the 29th May the rivals met.*

* See above, p. 201.

Troubridge, with fifty of the "Castors," was a prisoner on board the *Sanspareil*, and must have passed an anxious time during these latter days in May, when the fleets were constantly in sight of one another and frequently partially engaged.

On the glorious First of June, he, to his delight, saw Lord Howe to windward and forming line of battle. For a short hour they hauled off, the French officers rallying Troubridge. His quick eye had, however, seen the breakfast pendant flying, and he was able to assure his jeering hosts that, when fed, the British fleet would give them all the fighting they were likely to want for that day.

Lord Howe, bearing up, speedily justified his words, and they were soon hotly engaged, while Troubridge was sent below, in charge of a sentry.

In intense excitement he heard the roar of the battle in which De Nielly took a leading part; the fore and main masts went by the board, and at last the mizzen-mast, against which he was leaning. It is related that he then seized his astonished sentry by the arms and shook him warmly in a frenzy of excitement, and rushing past him on deck found the *Sanspareil* had struck her colours.

He was at once given by Lord Howe the command of the *Sanspareil*, and worked her home under jury masts as a prize, arriving at Spithead in August, and on his arrival was appointed to the command of the *Culloden*, 74. After a few months in the Channel fleet, the *Culloden* was ordered to the Mediterranean, and arrived at San Fiorenzo in July, 1795, joining the Flag of Admiral Hotham. On the 14th July the *Culloden* took part in the battle, generally known as "Hotham's second indecisive action." As she was getting alongside one of the enemy's 74's, her main topmast was shot away and she dropped astern; the wind failing, the fleets separated with the loss to the enemy of the *Alcide*, which blew up. The *Culloden* lost several killed and wounded, the latter including the First Lieutenant, Mr. Whittier, who was promoted.

In September Troubridge was ordered with a small squadron to the Levant, to look after a French force under

Admiral Ganteaume, who had sailed from Toulon, to harass our trade in those waters.

His search was unsuccessful, and he returned to San Fiorenzo in December to find the fleet under the command of Sir John Jervis whom he then met for the first time, and upon whom his excellent professional qualities at once made a good impression.

"I enclose Captain Troubridge's despatches," writes Jervis, "of his proceedings in the Levant, which I am persuaded will merit their Lordships' approbation, for, in the course of my service, I do not recollect an instance of greater vigour and despatch."

And again, shortly after, to the Secretary of the Admiralty: "I am afraid of being thought a puffer like many of my brethren, or I should have before dealt out to the Board the merits of Captain Troubridge which are very uncommon. I never saw him before my arrival at San Fiorenzo."

In January, 1796, the fleet took station for the blockade of Toulon, the inshore squadron being under the command of Troubridge, a service, at that season of the year, of a severity that seamen alone can estimate.

The blockade continued without intermission until October, A few extracts from Jervis's despatches are interesting:

On the 13th June he writes: "The enemy bears the blockade of Toulon with Christian patience. Captain Troubridge, who commands the light squadron, never is two miles from the entrance, and I keep as near as my heavy sailing-ships will enable me." And again: "The enemy is frequently alert when we stand in near the shore, and the light squadron under Captain Troubridge keeps the batteries in a continual blaze."

In October, however, the order came from home to evacuate the Mediterranean, and the fleet sailed for Gibraltar, arriving there on the 1st December. After a short refit, they left for the Tagus, where they remained until early in February, when hearing the Spanish fleet was out, they put to sea.

On the 13th the *Culloden* was badly in collision with the *Colossus*, losing her bowsprit and foretopmast, but in the

morning, "to the surprise of all who had seen her," reported ready for action, and was sent ahead to look out.

At daybreak the enemy were sighted, and the signal made to form line of battle ahead and astern of the Admiral, by which formation Troubridge had the intense satisfaction of finding the *Culloden* become the leader of the fleet.

Jervis's force of fifteen battleships in single line ahead was now steering by the wind direct for the Spanish fleet of twenty-seven ships sailing large, and roughly formed in two divisions some miles apart. To attack the windward division with his van, while his rear "contained" the lee division, and prevented them from coming to the assistance of their friends, was his plan of attack.

The few hours that followed were, perhaps, the best in Troubridge's life. The account of the opening of the ball by the *Culloden* is best given in the words of her First Lieutenant; afterwards Admiral, Griffiths.

"At twelve o'clock as the *Culloden* was reaching close up to the enemy and their leading division now passed ahead, the British fleet hoisted their Colours and the *Culloden* opened her fire. But as precisely what the signal directed was the course that gallant ship steered, it led her, not exactly through the gap in the enemy's line but towards two three-decked ships, and so directly on board the last and largest of them, that Captain Troubridge's First Lieutenant reported the collision that seemed inevitable: 'Can't help it, Griffiths, let the weakest fend off,' was that most gallant hero's only reply: and the *Culloden* stood on until through every port on all three decks of the enemy's ship the crew could be perceived at their quarters pointing their guns and ready to fire. Two double-shotted broadsides, fired as if by a second's watch in the silence of a Port Admiral's inspection, told with such dreadful effect and threw the Spaniard into such irrecoverable confusion that she went about, while the *Culloden* passed straight and triumphantly through."

Troubridge now prepared to tack the *Culloden*, hoisting his repeating signal "made up" and with every man at his station.

Hardly had the Flagship's signal showed above the netting when he called out "Break the stop; Down with the helm," and the *Culloden* went round. With such dashing promptitude Sir John Jervis was above measure delighted. "Look!" he cried; "look at Troubridge; he tacks his ship to battle as if the eyes of all England were on him, and would to God they were!" Nelson in the *Captain* had in the meanwhile observed that the Spanish ships of their weather division were escaping to leeward past the rear of our fleet, now tacking in succession after the *Culloden*, and accordingly wore athwart their course. This manœuvre brought the *Captain* and *Culloden* in company, opposed to four of the largest Spanish ships, which apparently unequal contest they maintained for an hour, until relieved by Collingwood coming up in the *Excellent*.

"The *Captain* and the *Culloden* are alone and unsupported," said Sir Robert Calder, Captain of the Fleet to the Admiral. "Shall I recall them?" "No," he replied, "I pin my faith on those ships." And he was right, for, joined by Collingwood, Nelson compelled his opponents to strike, while the *Culloden*, with everything shot away, dropped astern.

Four prizes were the result of this action so celebrated as the Battle of St. Vincent, and from which Troubridge gained an increased reputation in the fleet for courage and ability; and was now recognised as one of the most distinguished of the captains, that were in that extraordinary command. The day following the battle Collingwood wrote to Nelson, "The highest rewards are due to you and *Culloden*," while Nelson writing to his brother, said: "I will partake of nothing but what shall include Collingwood and Troubridge. We are the only three ships who made great exertions on that glorious day." *

Sir John Jervis, now created Earl of St. Vincent, in his official despatch mentioned only his Captain of the Fleet, but writing privately to Lord Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty, said:

"To your Lordship it becomes me to add (to my official despatch) that Captain Troubridge in the *Culloden* led the

* For the battle of St. Vincent, see also pp. 285, 302.

squadron through the enemy in a masterly style, and tacked the instant the signal flew."

The *Culloden* lost fifty-seven killed and wounded on this day, and for his service Troubridge received a gold medal.

A period of refitting at Lisbon now ensued, and was followed by the blockade of Cadiz, in which port the Spanish fleet had taken refuge.

In June a project was formed by Nelson to seize the Spanish galleons from the Americas, shortly expected to put into Teneriffe.

Permission having been obtained from Lord St. Vincent to make the attempt, the expedition sailed from Cadiz on the 18th July. It consisted of three 74's, four frigates, and the *Fox*, cutter, and arrived off the Canary Islands on the 20th July.

The Seamen and Marines of the fleet were at once embarked in the frigates, and placed under the command of Troubridge, with orders to surprise the town of Santa Cruz by night, and effect a landing.

Owing, however, to contrary winds and currents, they were unable to fetch within three miles by daylight; and the attempt was abandoned.

Nelson, however, determined for the honour of the service to accomplish something, and on the 24th July anchored his squadron three miles north of the harbour, and ordered all boats to be prepared for a night expedition.

The small-arm men were, as before, placed under Troubridge, while Nelson in person commanded the attack.

The assailants were discovered, Nelson was severely wounded, and in the dark night and heavy surf most of the boats missed the Mole. Some 300 men only under Troubridge and Captain Hood of the *Zealous*, succeeded in reaching the Convent, a few hundred yards from the shore. From there they sent a flag of truce to the Spanish Governor, and announced their intention of destroying the town, should they not be allowed to re-embark. He, for his part, was only too glad to get rid of his unwelcome and desperate guests, and a treaty was drawn up, permitting them to return

to their ships, but with the condition that the islands should be no more attacked during the war.

By most naval historians Troubridge has been blamed for the failure of this unlucky expedition. It has, perhaps, been unfortunate for his reputation that his own biography has never been written, but that he has only flitted across the stage in Nelsonic literature, the authors of which are seldom impartial.

Captain Mahan goes so far as to deduce from this expedition the theory that while Nelson was a great captain—an undeniable fact—Troubridge could only be an accomplished and gallant subordinate. It may be presumptuous to offer an opinion contrary to that of such an eminent authority, but the case is at least arguable.

What were the facts ? This was the first occasion in which Nelson had the sole direction of the operations of a squadron ; and to capture the city of Santa Cruz, he made certain plans which depended for success upon two conditions. First, the attack was to be a surprise ; secondly, it was to be at night.

Now the writer, being a few years ago at Santa Cruz, visited carefully the scene of the assault, and further was presented with the Spanish official account of the proceedings, with the details of the disposition of the defending force.

So far from being a surprise, the Governor had known for some days of the intended expedition. Every able-bodied man, well armed, in addition to a large number of troops, was employed in the forts, and all the women and children in Santa Cruz were sent two days previously to the town of Lagunas, six miles inland. There was therefore no surprise.

As regards the night assault, the condition was that the frigates, encumbered with the small-arm men and marines of the fleet, were to beat from below the horizon before dark to the shore at Santa Cruz, before daylight. The wind was adverse, as was the current, while the high land of Teneriffe, through which the wind filters in alternate strong squalls, and calms made the desired result from the point of view of simple sailing almost impossible of attainment.

The plan conceived for the second attempt was even

more hopeless. Some fifty boats, loaded with men, were to pull three miles, and strike a very small mole on a dark night, on a surf-beaten coast, well defended with many batteries. Small wonder that contemporary letters describe the attempt as rash. It was a desperate expedient, and the brightest feature of this unfortunate business was the resolute bearing of Troubridge and his comrades when on shore, which compelled every one to recognise that our seamen, though defeated, preserved their honour untarnished.

After wintering at Lisbon, the spring of 1798 saw the blockade of Cadiz once more resumed, Troubridge commanding the inshore squadron composed of the *élite* of the fleet. Early in May, Nelson was despatched with a small squadron up the Straits, to watch the French, now preparing some expedition at Toulon, and later in the month, orders were received by St. Vincent from home to reinforce him.

Troubridge accordingly with ten line-of-battle ships left Cadiz, and effected a rendezvous with Nelson on the 7th June.

The long and weary search for the French fleet now followed: from Naples to Malta, down the Levant, back to Syracuse and Naples, during all which time so trying to Nelson, Troubridge was always at his right hand, negotiating at Naples, victualling at Syracuse and generally relieving his friend and chief of the arduous details of the equipment of the squadron.

At last, on the afternoon of the 1st August, the French fleet was sighted in Aboukir Bay. But alas! it was destined to be a heart-breaking night for Troubridge.

When the enemy were seen, the *Culloden* with her division, consisting of the *Alexander*, *Swiftsure*, and *Leander*, were some distance astern of the fleet, the *Culloden* towing a prize. At 2.55 the signal was made to prepare for battle, and the *Culloden* at once asked permission to cast off tow, which was affirmed, and her signal made to join the Admiral. The sun was just setting when the leading ship of our fleet opened her fire on the enemy, and darkness rapidly set in. The difficult pilotage, and Troubridge's anxiety to bring his

division into action, were responsible for the disaster that now occurred.

For, when rounding the tail of the Becquières shoal and just outside gunshot of the enemy, with whom the rest of the squadron were warmly engaged, the *Culloden* took the ground.

It is hard to realise the mortification of her Captain at this terribly untoward event. But it could not be dwelt on. Everything called for action, and he at once made the necessary signals to the *Alexander* and *Swiftsure*, now actually steering to pass inside of him, that prevented their sharing his fate.

For nine hours did the *Culloden* remain heavily bumping on the reef, while the roar of battle, followed by the calm of victory, told them that the fight had been lost and won.

In the morning she was got afloat, but much damaged, rudder and false keel gone, main keel broken, and seven feet of water in the hold.

But in these circumstances Troubridge was at his best. "He saved the *Culloden* when none that I know of in the service would have attempted it," said Nelson, adding, "Captain Troubridge on shore is superior to Captains afloat."

Indeed Nelson's generous heart felt deeply for his friend. In his official despatch on the battle he never mentioned the circumstance of the *Culloden* grounding, but sent a paragraph to Lord St. Vincent, to be added to it if he thought it to Troubridge's advantage, while at the same time he wrote, "I consider Captain Troubridge's conduct as fully entitled to praise as any officer in the squadron. He commanded a division equally with Sir J. Saumarez, and I should feel distressed if any honour is granted to the one that is not granted to the other. . . . I have experienced the ability and activity of his mind and body. It was Troubridge who equipped the squadron so soon at Syracuse. It was Troubridge whom I left as myself at Naples, he is as a friend and an officer a nonpareil."

Troubridge was granted the gold medal for the Nile as a special mark of favour by the King for his great exertions

before and after the battle, although technically not entitled to it, the *Culloden* not having been "engaged."

So ended this celebrated action in which the British fleet engaged was probably the finest fighting force in every particular the world has seen.*

It could not but be so, when it is considered that the superior officers had the irresistible combination, that may never again be possible in our service, namely, youth and experience. Of Nelson the Rear-Admiral Commanding, and Saumarez and Troubridge his divisional Commanders, the latter, the eldest of the three, was under forty years of age, and it was the eighth general fleet action in which he had taken part.

After refitting, the fleet proceeded to Naples, whence Troubridge was again despatched to Alexandria as Senior Officer, but was shortly after relieved by Sir Sidney Smith, and rejoined Nelson's Flag.

Ferdinand, the King of the two Sicilies, was now at Naples. He had joined the coalition against the French, and supplied an army of 80,000 men on paper, which, under General Mack, had occupied Rome and advanced against the French, who still held strong positions in the Roman States.

Treachery, and cowardice, were fatal to the Neapolitan cause; and they were defeated and scattered by the French, who, joined by many of Ferdinand's late adherents, re-took the States, and, marching on Naples, occupied it, compelling Nelson to embark the Royal Family for Palermo.

A rumour that the French fleet was out of Brest, obliged Nelson to withdraw his ships from those waters and concentrate, but this coming to nothing, he now determined to make a vigorous effort to eject the French, and reseat Ferdinand on his throne.

The command of the forces, necessary to effect this, was given to Troubridge, who was ordered to fly a Commodore's Broad Pendant.

The reduction of Fort St. Elmo in the Bay of Naples was his first objective, to which he brought all his vigour and

* For the tactics of the battle of the Nile and its results, see p. 306.

resources. A thousand seamen, about the same number of British and Portuguese marines, a thousand Russian troops, and many native allies composed his motley force.

Batteries were immediately erected 700 yards from the Fort, and each day at a nearer distance until, on the 5th July, he was but 200 yards from the water-wall, and plans were made to carry the place by storm. He nearly lost his life here by the explosion of a shell, and was covered with the earth thrown up. Nelson was extremely impatient for the fall of this place, as it would inevitably include that of Naples. Writing to him, Troubridge says:—

“I am really sorry to see your Lordship so low-spirited, all will go well, but the devilish fort is so high that our batteries are obliged to be mountains.”

Troubridge had further trouble in the “diabolical understanding” his Neapolitan advanced guard soon set up with the French garrison.

On the 12th July he set up his last battery only 180 yards from the fort which, in his own words, “brought the vagabonds to their senses after much trouble and palaver.” And he was able to report that St. Elmo had capitulated. Troubridge was warmly commended for his success. Nelson, in his despatch to Lord Keith, said, “The very great strength of St. Elmo and its formidable position will mark with what fortitude perseverance and ability the combined forces must have acted. I have now to state to your Lordship that though the ability and resources of my brave friend Troubridge are well known to the world, yet he had difficulties to contend with in every way, which the state of the Capital will easily bring to your idea that have raised his character even higher than it was before.” While to Lord Spencer he wrote, “It would be supposing you, my dear Lord, were ignorant of his merits, were I to say more than that he is a first-rate general;” and to the Duke of Clarence, “None but a sailor would have placed a battery only 180 yards from St. Elmo Castle. A soldier must have gone according to art and the zigzag way, my brave Troubridge went straight, for we had no time to spare.”

The sieges of Capua and Gaëta now followed, and were crowned with equal success, both places capitulating. Next, Civita Vecchia, the seaport of Rome, was invested. On the 30th September it surrendered, the terms including the evacuation of the Capital and all the Papal States. Captain Louis was accordingly despatched up the Tiber with his ship's boats, and hoisted British Colours on the Capitol.

This ended Troubridge's services on the Coast of Italy. From his own Sovereign he received the reward of a baronetcy, while from King Ferdinand he received a pension of £500 per annum, and was created the first Knight Commander of a new Order, that of St. Ferdinand and merit. In the *fêtes*, which marked the King's return to his dominions, a prominent feature was an inscription to "The intrepid Troubridge, bold in action, wise, and firm in council."

The next service on which Troubridge was ordered was the blockade of Malta, the command of which he took over in December, 1799.

The French were at this time occupying Valletta with some 5000 men, while in the harbour lay a few men-of-war, the remnant of the Nile fleet.

The investing force consisted of two British regiments, with 1500 Maltese, who co-operated with the blockading squadron. The greatest difficulty with which Troubridge had to contend, was the lack of provisions for the Maltese, who were in a terrible state of distress.

King Ferdinand, on whose behalf the operations for the reduction of Malta were nominally undertaken, promised everything, but would perform nothing, being shrewd enough to know that our ostensible object in reducing the islands was probably only secondary to our real intention to annex them, after ousting the French. Troubridge's correspondence at this time is full of laments, and strictures on the Neapolitan court. He was, moreover, much disturbed at Nelson's action in remaining feasting at Palermo, while the capitulation of Malta appeared imminent. No man better than himself knew and feared the influence of Lady Hamilton, and caring less for his own laurels, than for the reputation of

Nelson, he did his utmost to induce him to take command of the blockade.

"Pardon me, my Lord," he wrote, "it is my sincere esteem for you that makes me mention it. I know you can have no pleasure sitting up all night at cards, why then sacrifice your health, purse, ease, everything to the customs of a country where your stay cannot be long? Your Lordship is a stranger to half that happens, and the talk it occasions. I beseech Your Lordship leave off. It is the sincere esteem for you that makes me risk your displeasure." And as a forlorn hope he wrote to Lady Hamilton repeatedly on the subject. "Be assured," he said, "I have not written to you from any impertinent interference, but from a wish to warn you of the ideas that are going about, which you cannot hear of, as no person can be indifferent to the construction put on things that may appear to your ladyship innocent. . . . You may not know you have many enemies. I therefore risk your displeasure telling you."

These letters actually did draw Nelson for a short time from Palermo, and he had the satisfaction of capturing the *Genereux* off Cape Passaro, but the attraction was too great, and although Troubridge wrote on the 24th February, "I beseech you hear the entreaties of a sincere friend and do not go to Sicily for the present," he returned there early in March.

The blockade meanwhile continued, the *Guillaume Tell* being now the only French line-of-battle ship in the harbour.

The *Culloden* lay in Marsa Scirocco, her signalmen, with a Lieutenant, kept watch nightly on Cottonera heights, while the ships constantly hovered at the mouth of the harbour.

When, therefore, the *Guillaume Tell* slipped out at midnight on the 30th March, she was immediately observed and pursued, and after a gallant defence captured. In his official despatch to Lord Keith, Nelson writes—

"The attention of Commodore Troubridge, in placing officers and men to attend the movements of the French Ships, and the exactness with which his orders were executed, are a proof that the same vigour of mind remains, although the body I am sorry to say is almost worn away."

In truth, Troubridge was almost worn out ; the bitter disappointment of the Nile he had never got over, while the six years of hard service, without a break, would have worn out the strongest man.

The capitulation now drew nigh, and again in the name of all the officers of the fleet, he made an effort to drag Nelson from the arms of his enchantress. After begging him to come on board the *Culloden*, he says, " Your Friends, my Lord, absolutely as far as they dare insist on your staying to sign the capitulation. Be on your guard ! "

It was of no avail, and he only gathered the usual reward in such cases—the dislike of the lady. His own time was however coming, for Lord St. Vincent's appointment to command the Channel Fleet was in the air, and he required Troubridge home. The *Culloden*, indeed, was unfit for further service as Nelson reported, " although," he added, " I am now satisfied that if her bottom were knocked out Troubridge would find means to make her swim."

The *Culloden* left Malta in May, arriving in England in June, and thus ended her long and eventful commission in the Mediterranean.

In July Troubridge was appointed Captain of the fleet in the Channel, where Lord St. Vincent had hoisted his Flag in the *Ville de Paris*.

The Channel Fleet was at this time a hotbed of mutiny and disaffection, from, it is melancholy to state, the highest to the lowest ranks.

It was, indeed, with the object of quelling this insubordinate feeling that St. Vincent was sent there, and the nine months of his command were most trying and distasteful to him and to Troubridge.

That the port of Brest should be closely blockaded in winter, as in summer, was the first principle of St. Vincent's strategy, with which many officers disagreed ; some, like Lord Howe, considered that the deterioration in " materiel " that the fleet suffered in the heavy winter gales, did not compensate for the advantage of being on the spot. Others, less public-spirited, consulted their own convenience and comfort, and

were guided thereby in their opinions, while, for the lower ranks, it may be frankly stated that they were weary of the war and its hardships.

To this state of affairs St. Vincent brought his customary stern discipline and unrelenting severity, while to support him to the utmost of his ability, was the business of his Captain of the Fleet. In November the winter gales began, and St. Vincent writes :

“Seven-eighths of the captains who compose this fleet are practising every subterfuge to get into harbour for the winter. Troubridge’s patience is almost exhausted and he exclaims most feelingly against the degeneracy of our profession. I am at my wits’ end to compose orders to meet every shift, evasion and neglect of duty.”

Blockade Brest however he did, and throughout the winter, though the *Ville de Paris* was herself blown back to Torbay on one occasion, to the delight of those who opposed his system.

But the time was now coming when Troubridge was to finish with blockades and their troubles.

In February, 1801, Lord St. Vincent was offered and accepted the post of First Lord of the Admiralty, and nominated Troubridge as his Senior Sea Lord. The new Board took office on the 21st February. For the three years following until May, 1804, Troubridge served under Lord St. Vincent at the Admiralty. The First Lord being himself a seaman, it only remained for the Senior Sea Lord to work out and further the executive details of his many reforms.

The chief object of attack by St. Vincent was the wholesale corruption that existed in the dockyards, which no one had dared to deal with while the country was at war. In Tucker’s ‘Life of St. Vincent’ a recital of the most flagrant of the prevalent abuses may be found, which to-day appear almost incredible.*

The fitting out of the Baltic fleet under Sir Hyde Parker and Nelson occupied the early attention of the Board, the latter writing almost daily to his old friend on matters

* See above p. 289.

connected with the organisation and objects of the expedition.

After the battle of Copenhagen Nelson's letters are mostly on the subject of his bad health and much-wished-for relief. He had always resented Parker's appointment as Commander-in-Chief, and to Troubridge openly said so. "Had it been given to me at first, good to myself and the cause might have arisen. Quiet I must have, but I dare say I have tormented you so much on the subject that you say, 'Damn him, I wish he was dead and not plaguing me in this way.'" He returned home shortly after. In 1802 Troubridge was returned as Member of Parliament for Great Yarmouth, where the Troubridge boat, in which he was carried round the town, may still be seen.

In the same year Nelson was appointed to command the flotilla that had been formed in the Channel to repel the projected French invasion. After the operations at Boulogne were ended,* he desired to return to Merton; but Mr. Addington, the Prime Minister, begged Lord St. Vincent to retain Nelson in the Channel to "reassure the country with the prestige of his name," with which necessity St. Vincent cordially agreed. On Troubridge, who it is true had no sympathy with Nelson's infatuation, Nelson laid all the blame of his retention there, being spurred thereto by Lady Hamilton, who had never forgiven Troubridge for his frank letters of old days. It is a melancholy fact that for some time at Merton the name of Troubridge was synonymous with ingratitude. It is an old story, one of the oldest, of a bad woman parting two brave men; and there we may leave it.

The breach was healed the year after, and Troubridge's only son went to the *Victory*, to serve under Nelson, as a Midshipman.

In April, 1804, Troubridge was promoted to Rear Admiral of the Blue; and in May, on the fall of the Government, retired from the Admiralty with his chief.

A year on shore was followed by his appointment to

* See above, p. 312.

command the East Indies station to the eastward of Point de Galle, Sir Edward Pellew commanding to the westward.

He sailed in May on board the *Blenheim*, a worn-out old three-decker. Shortly after passing Madagascar, having with him a convoy of ten Indiamen, he fell in with the French Admiral Linois in the *Marengo*, with two frigates in company; but finding the quality of the *Blenheim*, they hauled off, and, chase being useless, Troubridge proceeded on his voyage.

His time in the East Indies was uneventful. Many rich captures were made, some, to his great satisfaction, by his son. This officer he had taken with him in the *Blenheim*, as Midshipman. On his attaining sixteen years of age, and having been the necessary six years at sea (he had been a midshipman in the *Edgar* at Copenhagen at the age of ten), he passed for Lieutenant, and by an act of nepotism which cannot be excused, was, on the same day, promoted Commander; and on the same day the following year to Post-Captain, being probably the youngest officer of that rank on record.

In April, 1806, it being considered inadvisable to keep the East India station divided into two commands, Troubridge was appointed to the command at the Cape of Good Hope.

On the 12th January, 1807, he left Madras in the *Blenheim*, with the *Java* and *Harrier* in company. The *Blenheim* had been badly on shore in the Straits of Malacca, and was in no fit state for the voyage. On the 1st February they got in a cyclone near the south-east end of Madagascar, from which the *Harrier* alone emerged, having parted from her consorts, then in great distress. From that day to this they have never been seen or heard of! So tragically perished the gallant Troubridge, "the Bayard of the British Navy."

In personal appearance he was of an erect and noble figure, a handsome, manly and open countenance. In private life he was the idol of his family, the charm of society, the very rock of friendship, and the fortress of honour.

In public life, the acuteness of his intellect, his perception of all the points, however distant, all the circumstances however various which ought to be considered, his sound

judgment, his fearless decision, and his excellent counsel were almost without parallel. The example of his life and career is of value to all naval officers.

The opportunity of rising to the greatest heights in their profession is given to very few. In fact it is improbable that more than one admiral's name each century since the days of Elizabeth, is now remembered by the multitude. How many might have risen to greater eminence, had they been loyally served by their subordinates !

Benbow, Byng, Suffren, and their captains, Mathews and Lestock, Keppel and Palliser, Rodney and Hood, St. Vincent and Sir John Orde ; these are but a few of the examples, easily remembered, in which the service of the country to which they belonged would have been furthered had the seniors and juniors been in accord.

The fault may have lain with one or the other, but this much is certain and may be taken to heart : that loyal and energetic subordinates are nearly as indispensable to the sea service of the country as officers of commanding genius in war.

These qualities, to which indeed with only natural talents and abilities any officer may attain, were remarkably displayed throughout his career by Troubridge, and over and above them were his undeniable greatness in seamanship and his ability as a commander. His character was summed up by that great sea officer, Lord St. Vincent, in these beautiful words : "The ablest adviser and best executive officer in the British Navy, with honour and courage as bright as his sword."



Samuel Hood

(SIGNED WITH THE LEFT HAND AFTER LOSS OF THE RIGHT ARM.)

VICE-ADMIRAL SIR SAMUEL HOOD, K.B.

From an Engraving by E. Bocquet of the Painting by Sir William Beechey, R.A.

XIX.

VICE-ADMIRAL SIR SAMUEL HOOD.

BY ADMIRAL SIR RICHARD VESEY HAMILTON, G.C.B.

IT is the proud boast of the British Navy that whatever may have been the merits of the past generations of our admirals, they have had as worthy successors. Boscawen and Hawke were succeeded by Keppel, Rodney, and Howe ; they again by Hood, Bridport, Duncan, St. Vincent ; and in their turn by Saumarez, Cornwallis, Collingwood, Troubridge, Exmouth ;—all stars of the first magnitude, with very many of the second order, some of whom would have been of the first magnitude had the war lasted and the opportunity occurred. Nelson alone left no successor ; his work was done. As it has been, so it always will be the highest aim of every naval officer to do his best for the future efficiency of the naval service, and as the British Navy is by universal consent the model for all others, it cannot but be allowed that success has resulted from their efforts.

Judging from his career, Sir Samuel Hood would have been amongst the first admirals of his day had he been born a few years earlier. He began his naval career in the *Courageux*, of 74 guns, commanded by his cousin Sir Samuel, afterwards Viscount Hood, in 1776, and in the following year was transferred to the *Robust*, also of 74 guns, commanded by the brother of his late captain, Captain Alexander Hood, afterwards Viscount Bridport, in which ship he was in the indecisive battle off Ushant between the French and English fleets on the 27th July, 1778,* both sides claiming a victory

* See note on p. 235.

with equal justice, *i.e.* none at all, and as he served as A.D.C. to his captain, he probably gained valuable experience for his future career. He then served in the *Lively*, sloop of war, which in the same year captured, in the Channel, the *Duchesse de Chartre*, a large French privateer.

In October, 1780, he joined, as a lieutenant, the *Barfleur*, a small three-decker of 98 guns, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood (afterwards Lord Hood), who had been specially selected as second in command to Sir George Rodney, Commander-in-Chief in the West Indies, the principal scene of naval warfare at that time. Early in 1781 our hero was present at the capture of St. Eustatius, a Dutch island on which large fortunes had been made by supplying our enemies, the French, with naval stores.*

Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, after the capture of St. Eustatius, was detached to blockade the French island of Martinique, and intercept an expected convoy under the escort of 12 line-of-battle ships. Instead of which Count de Grasse unexpectedly appeared on the 29th April, 1781, with 18 sail of the line reinforced by 6 from Martinique, to which Sir Samuel with his 18 gave battle, and on the next day remained hove-to, to leeward of De Grasse, who consequently had the option of renewing the conflict if he felt disposed. This action greatly raised Sir Samuel Hood's credit in his profession. De Grasse did not avail himself of the opportunity, and Sir Samuel proceeded to join his Commander-in-Chief.†

The approach of the hurricane months rendered all naval operations in the West Indies from July to October impossible, and part of the West Indian fleet at that time proceeded to North America under Admiral Hood, to assist our forces warring against our revolted colonies, aided by the French fleet and army, which brought Sir Samuel again in collision with De Grasse in the indecisive battle off the Chesapeake on the following 5th September. Rear-Admiral Graves commanded our fleet of 19 ships against 24 French; but the

* See p. 168.

† For these and the following operations, see also the chapter on Lord Hood, pp. 255-265.

latter gained the position in Chesapeake Bay, which forced the surrender of Yorktown and our army under Lord Cornwallis, and so won the honours of the campaign.

The winter season preventing all fleet operations on the coast of North America, Sir Samuel Hood returned to the West Indies, and in the short time he was acting as Commander-in-Chief gave proof of his great qualities for command, and young Samuel Hood had many opportunities of gaining experience most useful to him in his after career. The great superiority of the French prior to the arrival of Hood's fleet had given them almost undisputed command in the West Indies, and as they had always many more troops out there than we had, under the enterprising General the Marquis de Bouillie, aided by the fleet, several of our islands were captured, and St. Christopher, or St. Kitts, as it is commonly called, was besieged when Hood arrived with 22 sail of the line and about 1000 troops, hoping to be able to throw succour into the beleaguered citadel, against the French fleet of 29 ships of the line and 6000 or 7000 troops on the island. On his approach, De Grasse, to take advantage of his superiority in numbers, left the anchorage off Basse Terre and proceeded to sea to gain an offing. Sir Samuel Hood, having previously made the necessary arrangements, immediately occupied the vacated anchorage, on the 26th January, 1782, and by one of the most masterly manœuvres ever made, took up a position commanding the anchorage, and one where, with the prevailing Trade Winds, it was impossible to double on his bow or rear, or to make a front attack except under way, as he had anchored so close to the edge of the bank that no ships could anchor outside him. In taking up this position his rear and part of his centre was engaged; and, very wroth at being outwitted, on the following day De Grasse made two furious attacks on our fleet, which were repelled, the fleet under way sustaining more damage than that at anchor, as was to be expected. The island, however, fell, and our fleet being liable to be attacked by land as well as by sea, the cables were ordered to be cut punctually at 11 P.M., and the squadron escaped, unknown to the French,

and proceeded to join the Commander-in-Chief, who had just arrived with reinforcements from England.

On the 31st January our hero was promoted to master and commander by his cousin, Sir Samuel; but as his ship was lying as a convalescent vessel at Antigua, he preferred more active service, and volunteered to remain in the *Barfleur*, and was well rewarded by being present in the action of the 9th April, 1782, in which part of the van squadron, under Sir Samuel Hood, was engaged with the greater portion of the French fleet, the remainder of ours being becalmed under Dominica and unable to join in the fray for some hours; and on the 12th was present at the signal defeat of the French fleet and the surrender of De Grasse to his old opponent Hood, in the *Barfleur*, after having been opposed to one another in less than a year in five general engagements, or, counting the engagement at St. Kitts as three, seven times. Commander Hood was also present when four of the fugitives from the 12th April were captured in the Mona Passage, by part of the fleet detached in pursuit under Sir Samuel Hood, an amount of experience that has probably never fallen to the lot of so young an officer, only 21 years of age, and the sequel will show how admirably he profited by it. Nothing stirring occurred during the remainder of the war with our revolted colonies, now the United States; and after the preliminaries of peace were signed in 1783, Commander Hood went to France, where he remained till 1785, when he was appointed to the command of the *Weazle*, sloop of war, in which he showed so much zeal and activity in surveying the unknown and dangerous coasts and harbours of Nova Scotia, that the Commander-in-Chief promoted him to post-captain in the *Thisbe*, frigate, in which he returned to England in December, 1789.

In May, 1790, he was appointed to the *Junó*, a frigate of 36 guns, and went to the West Indies. Only one event of note occurred while out there. The character of the man is well illustrated by a letter addressed to the *Kingston Daily Advertiser*, February 3, 1791, from a gentleman who witnessed the occurrence.

After describing invaluable assistance rendered by Hood

to a merchant ship in a heavy gale of wind on the previous day, when his two principal boats which rendered the assistance were unable to return to the ship, the gentleman proceeds to describe the sad feelings of every one on shore at seeing a dismasted and water-logged shallop drifting on to the breakers, to which no assistance could be rendered from the shore. Captain Hood, having no other boat, manned his barge, and observing the crew hanging back, jumped into the boat, saying, "I never gave an order to a sailor which I was not ready to undertake and execute myself." "The spectators, you may suppose, were numerous; our distress was increased instead of being allayed by the bold attempt, for we expected every moment to see the barge and her crew perish, the sea running mountains high and with incredible violence; but it pleased the Almighty to favour the attempt, and to protect the brave and humane Captain Hood and his crew. In less than half an hour the barge reached the wreck, which had now driven almost on the roaring reef. One of her crew was drowned, the remaining three were saved, but so exhausted they were not able of themselves to get into the barge, and in two minutes more must have perished on the reef."

"The House of Assembly, Jamaica, February 22, 1791.

"Resolved *nem. con.* that the Receiver-General do forthwith remit to the Agent of this Colony the sum of 100 guineas for the purchase of a sword, to be presented to Captain Samuel Hood, of H.M.S. *Juno*, as a testimony of the high sense which this house entertains of his merits in saving, at the manifest peril of his own life, off the port of St. Ann, on the 3rd instant, the lives of three men, discovered on a wreck at sea, and who must have inevitably perished but for his gallant and humane exertions."

The Humane Society of Jamaica "at their last general meeting unanimously voted the thanks of the Society should be transmitted for your courageous and humane exertions at St. Ann's Bay, in saving the lives of fellow-creatures at the imminent risk of your own (July 8, 1791)."

I have dwelt on this feat, as in my opinion it is far more

deserving of mention than even the distinguished warlike deeds to be subsequently described.

In the autumn of 1791, and again in 1792, Hood was in attendance on George III. during his usual visit to Weymouth. In 1793, however, war with France called him to more active operations in the Mediterranean, where the fleet was commanded by Viscount Hood, his first captain. Readers of naval history are aware that Toulon was taken by Lord Hood in August, 1793, and evacuated by him in December.* Before the evacuation, the *Junó* had been sent to Malta for stores and supernumeraries, and returned a month later, unaware of the evacuation. Entering the outer harbour, then in possession of the French, at 10 P.M., January 11, 1794, Hood reports: "Not having a pilot on board, or any person acquainted with the port, I placed two midshipmen with night-glasses to look out for the fleet; but not discovering any vessels until we got near the entrance of the inner harbour, I supposed they had moved up there in the eastern gale. Seeing one vessel and several lights which I imagined to be the fleet, I entered the inner harbour under topsails only." In passing under the stern of a brig he was hailed to luff, which he did, and found himself ashore, a boat from the brig going to the town. A flaw of wind down the harbour drove the ship off the shoal, but on anchoring her stern was aground. Boats were hoisted out to run out an anchor, to heave her further off. While this was doing a boat came alongside, and some officers coming on board informed Hood, "it was the regulation of the port for him to go further up the harbour to perform ten days' quarantine. I kept asking where Lord Hood's ship was. . . . One of the mids said to me, 'They wear national cockades.' . . . Perceiving they were suspected, one of them replied, 'Soyez tranquille, les Anglois sont de brave gens, nous les traitons bien; l'Amiral Anglois est sortie il y a quelque temps.' It may be more easily conceived than any words can express what I felt at that moment. It became known throughout the ship that all were probably prisoners. At the same time a flaw of wind

* See above, pp. 266-268.

came down the harbour, and Lieutenant Webley said to me, 'I believe, sir, we shall be able to fetch out if we can get her under sail.' I immediately perceived we should have a chance of saving the ship, and at least, if we did not, we ought not to lose His Majesty's ship without some contention." Every person went to his station, the tables were turned, the French were sent below as prisoners. "I believe, in an instant such a change in people was never seen; every officer and man was at his station, and I do think within three minutes every sail was set and the yards braced ready for casting." The cable was cut, the ship cast the right way, and a favourable flaw of wind coming down the harbour gave her good way, "and we had then every prospect of getting out, if the forts did not disable us, as they and the brig had opened fire. . . . As soon as the sails were well trimmed, I beat to quarters, but not with the intention of firing till we were sure of getting out"—which, fortune favouring the bold, they eventually did at half-past twelve at night, having no one killed, and the ship only hulled twice and some rigging shot away. To go into the inner harbour at night, in which no one had ever been in before, and to go out again in less than two and a half hours, would have been a fine piece of seamanship, even if unopposed; but when we consider it was opposed by forts on both sides of the harbour it shows what courage, presence of mind, and readiness of resource can do. "Never give up the ship," should be the seaman's motto, "while a chance exists of saving her."

He was next employed with Captain Young, of the *Fortitude*, 74 guns, in bombarding the tower, on the height of Martello, overlooking and commanding the anchorage in St. Fiorenzo Bay, in Corsica. The tower—from which we derived the idea of the Martello towers studding our south coast, when Napoleon threatened us with invasion—had only thirty-six men and but two guns, yet it beat off the two ships, mounting 100 guns, set the *Fortitude* on fire with red-hot shot in several places, killing and wounding several of the crew. Being perched on a height, it was quite secure against fire from ships.

"By the incredible exertions of the British seamen, in dragging guns up precipices almost perpendicular," the tower of Martello was taken from the heights which commanded it, and to which its guns could make no reply. Captain Young received great praise for the admirable and cool manner he brought his ship out of action, although on fire in four places—as did Captain Hood for his share of the work from Commodore Linzee, under whom he was immediately serving. He also received the thanks of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army for his services in getting up cannon for the different batteries and aiding the army in the attack on San Fiorenzo. Hood was then transferred to the *Aigle*, frigate, and was recommended by the Commander-in-Chief for service at the siege and blockade of Calvi, and during the year 1795 he commanded a small squadron in the Greek Archipelago for the protection of trade and to blockade a squadron of the enemy's frigates. For his exertions on that service he received the warmest thanks of the Levant Company, conveyed through our ambassador at Constantinople: "We request you will have the goodness to communicate to Captain Hood the enclosed extracts of the minutes of our general court, expressive of our thanks for his gallant conduct and attention to the protection of our trade."

The thanks of the merchants of Smyrna were also communicated to him on equally flattering terms. In April, 1796, Captain Hood was appointed to the *Zealous*, 74 guns, in which he was actively employed under Sir John Jervis off Toulon and Cadiz. He accompanied Nelson to the attack on Teneriffe.* Troubridge and Hood, who had succeeded in landing before the repulse of the main body, found themselves in the heart of the town of Santa Cruz with only about three hundred men, with no provisions, and their ammunition wet, and surrounded by several thousand Spanish, and as there was no hope of any relief, Sir T. Troubridge sent Hood to wait on the governor, to whom he delivered the following laconic message: "I am come, Sir, from the commanding officer of the British troops and seamen now within your walls

* For these operations, see, also, pp. 304, 340, 341.

... to say that as we are disappointed in the object for which we came" (the specie), "provided you will furnish us with boats we will return peacefully to our ships; but should any molestation be given us we will fire the town in different places with much regret, and force our way out at the point of the bayonet." Ten minutes was given to consider this message, and the governor, most probably being unaware of our small force, and not wishing to drive brave men to desperation, acceded to the terms. The governor behaved most generously, provided our men with rations, and sent them off to their ships, receiving the wounded into the Spanish hospitals, and granting permission to Nelson to send on shore to purchase fresh meat, etc.

The Spaniards were well prepared for our reception, and careful preparation ensured success, as it generally does. Had they been as well prepared for the recent war, the Americans would have had a very tough job before them, for it is evident the Spanish rank and file have not degenerated in fighting qualities from their illustrious forefathers. Two flags taken from us on that occasion were to be seen in the Cathedral of Santa Cruz a few years ago, and are there now most probably. We have so few failures in our Naval History that they ought never to be forgotten, as useful lessons are always to be learnt from them. In this particular case it would appear the Spaniards were well aware of our intentions and force, were superior in force, and well prepared for us, and we were not aware of theirs; moreover, it was work for a combined naval and military expedition. Blake had not to land only to attack the galleons in the harbour, which he destroyed, but was unable to bring them out.

The *Zealous* was again engaged under Nelson in the pursuit of Brueys' fleet and at its destruction in Aboukir Bay, the enemy's fleet having first been discovered from the *Zealous*.* Previous to entering on the engagement, Nelson hailed Hood, "What think you of engaging the enemy to-night?" "I don't know the soundings," was the answer, "but with your permission I will lead in and try." It is not

* For an account of the battle, see above, p. 306.

generally known that Nelson in his despatches would have given Hood the credit of confirming him in his intention of making a night attack. Hood, on being shown the despatch, begged that it might be altered, "as they were all brothers engaged in the same cause," and the admiral would have received the same advice from any other captain. This was not known for several years after the action, and then it did not come out through Hood. Equally noble was his conduct when, finding Foley, his junior, would not make way for him to lead in as directed by Nelson, he said to his first lieutenant, to avoid confusion, "This will never do. Well, never mind; Foley is a fine gallant fellow. Shorten sail. We must risk nothing that will tend to the enemy's advantage, and all will soon have enough to do." Next morning, when the *Villeneuve* was escaping, the *Zealous* attempted to prevent it, but as no other ship was ready to support her, Nelson recalled her. It is a curious fact that she only lost one man killed and seven wounded in the action, Providence, according to Hood, making up to them for the heavy loss sustained at Santa Cruz. It also shows that the "Butcher's Bill" is not always the test of work done. Captain Hood was then left, with a considerable squadron, to blockade the French in Alexandria, and maintain amicable relations with the Turkish pashas and governor; for this service the Sultan presented him with a gold snuff-box set with diamonds. In February, 1799, he joined Nelson at Palermo, and for his services to the Kingdom of Naples received the rank of Commander of the Order of St. Ferdinand and Merit, which he was licensed to wear by King George III. The *Zealous* was paid off in May, 1800, and Hood was appointed to the *Courageux* in the Channel, and in January, 1801, to the *Venerable*, also of 74 guns. After escorting a valuable fleet of East Indiamen beyond the Cape de Verdes, he joined Rear-Admiral Sir James Saumarez off Cadiz, and on the 6th July led the squadron under that admiral in his attack on a French squadron anchored under the protection of the batteries of Algesiras, opposite Gibraltar, in which we were repulsed with heavy loss and the capture of the *Hannibal*, 74, which ship had unfortunately grounded. The British squadron

repaired to Gibraltar to refit, in order to renew the action, one of the most glorious episodes in our naval history. The *Pompee*, of 74 guns, had to be left behind, being too much injured; and when Sir James, fearing his flagship, the *Cæsar*, could not be got ready in time, announced his intention of hoisting his flag in another ship, the crew declared the ship should be ready, and they would "work the hands all day, and watch and watch at night," and they kept their word: she was ready for a glorious victory, which made ample amends for the previous repulse. Linois' squadron had been reinforced by six Spanish line-of-battle ships, two being three-deckers. The allied squadron, therefore, consisted of two three-deckers, four of 80 to 90 guns, and three of 74; Sir James having only one 80 and four 74-gun ships. Notwithstanding this great disproportion, he attacked the enemy on the night of the 12th, which resulted in the loss by fire of the two Spanish three-deckers and the capture of the *San Antonio*, of 74 guns. The *Venerable* was able to bring the French 84-gun ship to action, but losing her mainmast and soon after her foremast, the French ship escaped into Cadiz. "This action was so near the shore that the *Venerable* struck on one of the shoals, losing her other masts." A frigate was sent to take off her people. Hood, however, succeeded in getting her off, and "before sunset was going round Cape Trafalgar under jury masts, and in such efficient order as to be fit for action had an enemy appeared." Brenton, in his 'Naval History' observes, "Can I say more in honour of her captain, officers, and crew?" "This gallant achievement," said St. Vincent in the House of Lords, "surpasses everything I have met with in reading, or on service; and when the news of it arrived, the Board at which I have the honour to preside were struck with astonishment to find that Sir J. Saumarez in so very short a time after the affair of Algesiras, had been able to come up with the enemy, and with unparalleled bravery to attack them and obtain a victory highly honourable to himself, and essentially conducive to the national glory." Lord Nelson seconded Lord St. Vincent, and H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence supported their eulogies of Saumarez.

The scene on leaving Gibraltar must have been striking, the whole population turning out to witness the *Cæsar* hauling out from the *Mole*, the band playing, "Come, cheer up, my lads, 'tis to glory we steer," the military bands playing, "Britons, strike home"—most admirably responded to, as the result proved. Even some of the wounded, escaping from hospital, got on board the *Cæsar*, and joined their shipmates at their guns—a breach of discipline, it is unnecessary to say, that was not punished.

The short peace of Amiens soon after placed Hood on half-pay. He was, however, not left long quiet, being appointed a joint commissioner of the island of Trinidad; and on the death of the Commander-in-Chief, Rear-Admiral Totty was appointed Commodore, and Commander-in-Chief on the Barbadoes station, and as soon as the declaration of war with France, in 1804, was received, the islands of Tobago and St. Lucia were captured by the joint operations of Army and Navy, 1200 of the French troops taken prisoners, the enemy's trade was quite destroyed, and, what was of still more importance, our own trade protected; and in less than a year the colonies of Demerara, Berbice, Essequibo and Surinam were added to His Majesty's Dominions, and Martinique greatly distressed. The arrival of Rear-Admiral Sir A. Cochrane in 1805 superseded him as Commander-in-Chief. Soon after his return, he was appointed to the *Centaur*, 74 guns, in the Channel, under Lord St. Vincent, who gave him command of a squadron to watch the enemy's motions off Rochforte. After four months' perseverance on this duty, he encountered a squadron of five French frigates and two corvettes full of troops bound to some of the French colonies. The *Centaur*, *Monarch*, and *Mars*, all 74-gun ships, brought the enemy to action, and captured four of the frigates, including the one that was commanded by the French commodore. Unfortunately, just before the conclusion of the action Sir S. Hood received a wound, which necessitated the amputation of his right arm, for which and other services he was granted a pension of £500 a year. Early in 1807 Sir S. Hood became the senior M.P. for Westminster, polling 5478 votes against

his second's, Mr. Sheridan's, 4758, and which success he owed to his service popularity and celebrity. He was also at the attack on Copenhagen in that year.

He was sent up the Baltic early in 1808, under his old Commander-in-Chief, Sir J. Saumarez, to assist the Swedes in the war they were then waging against Russia, that power having recently taken the greater part of Finland, and under the protection of its fleet landed troops on the Aland islands and the Island of Gothland; from these Stockholm was seriously threatened. The arrival of our fleet, as in the time of Peter the Great in 1719, saved Sweden from the ambitious view entertained by the Russian Government against its independence, and nowhere has the "Influence of Sea Power on History" been shown more clearly than in Baltic politics on the various occasions in which English fleets have been despatched into that almost inland sea, and on each occasion it prevented a war between the Baltic nations. On this occasion war was going on with Sweden, greatly to the advantage of Russia, owing to its naval superiority, and the irreparable loss the Swedes had sustained by the treacherous surrender of Sweaborg, with its immense naval resources.

The Swedish fleet of nine line-of-battle ships was at anchor in Oro Sound, closely watched by a superior Russian fleet off Hango Head, in Finland. On the 21st August Sir Samuel Hood, in the *Centaur*, of 74 guns, with the *Implacable*, of the same force, commanded by Captain Byam Martin, joined the Swedish fleet. On the 25th the combined fleet, eight Swedes and two English line-of-battle ships, proceeded to sea in pursuit of the Russian fleet of ten sail of the line, two being three-decked ships, and also three 50-gun ships, well to windward. In a chase to windward where the land necessitated frequent tacking, the two English ships, being coppered, had a great advantage, and by 2 A.M. of the 26th the *Implacable*, being the better sailer, had gained so much on the enemy as to give a reasonable hope of bringing on a general action, and she shortened sail at 2 A.M. to allow the *Centaur* to close, that ship being three miles to leeward, and the Swedish main body ten or twelve miles. At 4 A.M. the *Implacable*,

having made sail, gained sufficiently to engage the rearmost ship of the Russian squadron, which struck her colours after a sharp engagement of forty minutes, but the prize could not be taken possession of, as the whole Russian fleet had borne up to rescue her, and a three-decker being very close, the admiral recalled the *Implacable*. The *Implacable* had sustained some damage, and her mizzen-mast was expected to fall, but the water was fortunately perfectly smooth, and in thirty-five minutes it was fished, and other damage repaired sufficiently to be ready to renew the action.

On closing the *Centaur*, her ship's company gave the *Implacable* three cheers, and Sir Samuel expressed his highest approval of what he had witnessed. The two ships made sail in chase, hoping to cut off any straggler, but the wind shifting enabled the Russian fleet to take shelter in Port Baltic, in the Island of Rogo, on the south side of the Gulf of Finland; the *Sevolod*, which the *Implacable* had engaged, was taken in tow by a large frigate, but was compelled to anchor outside the harbour. The boats of the Russian squadron went out to tow in the *Sevolod*; seeing this, Sir Samuel Hood, in the *Centaur*, pushed in with great gallantry, and ran on board the Russian ship, boarded her, and succeeded in capturing her. Both ships went on shore together stem on to the beach. The *Implacable* had followed the *Centaur* closely, let go both anchors, and swung round so close to the *Centaur* that Captain Martin was able to cross to the Admiral's ship by the spanker-boom, holding on by the vang. Cables were passed between the two ships, and the *Centaur* was hove off; and then the *Implacable* was removed from her dangerous position. The prisoners were taken out of the *Sevolod*, and that ship was then burnt.

Captain Martin, of the *Implacable*, writes of this action: "The lame bird, being unable to reach port, anchored in an exposed situation, which enabled Hood in the evening to perform the most determined, well-arranged, glorious act that I think our naval history can boast of. He stood in with the utmost coolness, grappled with the enemy, and beat him to a mummy. . . . The *Centaur* lashed the bowsprit of the

enemy to her rigging, and boarded her sword in hand, regardless of her own fate, so that the Russian was subdued. If I had time to write I could never find language to express my admiration of this assault. It was done in defiance of twenty-three sail of Russians lying close at hand, and at a moment when the boats of their fleet were actually towing the *Sevolod* round the point of the harbour." The British loss in both ships during the action was 10 killed, and 40 wounded. The Russian loss was 45 killed, and 100 wounded. "The spirit, the love, the enthusiastic kind of attachment formed between our officers and ships' companies is one of the most interesting things I ever witnessed. . . . The captain of the Swedish fleet actually shed tears on board the *Centaur* this morning, in admiration of what passed," adds Byam Martin. The Commander-in-Chief shortly after arrived with reinforcements, and, not in any way disheartened by his repulse in Algesiras Bay, already narrated, was most anxious to attack the Russian fleet in Rogerwick, and was with difficulty dissuaded by Hood and Martin, who considered the Russians had taken opportunity of the time afforded them to fortify their position too strongly for a purely naval attack to succeed.

They were, however, effectually blockaded till the autumnal gales, when Hood returned to England.

In January, 1809, Hood was second in command at the embarkation of Sir John Moore's army at Corunna, and received the thanks of Parliament for his active services in superintending the naval portion of it. From 1809 to 1811 he was employed in the Mediterranean until promoted to Vice-Admiral, soon after which he was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the East Indies, where he died, after three days' illness from fever, 24th December, 1814, having had a most distinguished career. To recapitulate, he was in the battle off Ushant, July, 1778; off Martinique, April, 1781; off the Chesapeake in September, 1781; St. Kitts, January, 1782 (three attacks); 9th and 12th April, when De Grasse was signally defeated off Dominica. Later on, at the Battle of the Nile, and with Sir James Saumarez in 1801, at our repulse at Algesira, and the succeeding victory six days later. In the

capture of the *Sevolod* he displayed the highest attributes of a naval officer, a combination of nerve, judgment, and just appreciation of his foe, which enabled him, aided by an equally distinguished officer, the late Sir Byam Martin, with two English 74-gun ships, to destroy a Russian 74, not only in the presence of a fleet of 20 ships, including nine line-of-battle ships, two of them three-deckers, but in very close proximity to it. His right to be considered one of our Naval Heroes is incontestable. He was, moreover, well versed in the theory of his profession, "in navigation, geography, shipbuilding, fortification. He is also said to have studied the laws and customs of every country he visited; and there is reason to believe he was a good French and Spanish scholar." And where did he acquire this information? Not from the crammer, or a public school, but from his own development of the abilities God had given him, showing, as in the case of Fergusson and many others, genius will show out under the most adverse circumstances. Some interesting reminiscences of him are given in Basil Hall's interesting 'Fragments of Voyages,' Section III., when Hood was Commander-in-Chief in the East Indies.

NOTE.

HONOURS, ETC., RECEIVED BY SIR S. HOOD.

1798.—For the Nile: Thanks of Parliament and a sword from City of London.

1799.—For service rendered to the Turks: Received from the Grand Seigneur a handsome snuff-box set with diamonds.

1799, 1800.—Another from the King of Naples, as well as the Order of St. Ferdinand and Merit.

1801.—Thanks of Parliament for the victory of Sir James Saumarez.

1804.—Made a Knight of the Bath for distinguished service in the West Indies.

1805.—Received a pension of £500 a year for the loss of his arm.

1807.—Owing to his "professional services" and "just popularity" was elected senior M.P. for Westminster, polling 5478 votes, Mr. Sheridan being next, with 4758.

1808.—The King of Sweden conferred on him and his two captains the "Order of the Sword of Sweden;" and the "Freedom of the City of Exeter" was also conferred on them for the destruction of the *Sevolod*.

1809.—A Baronetcy was conferred on him.

In addition to the above, Sir Samuel Hood (personally) received (on February 1st, 1809) the thanks of the House of Commons for the naval arrangements upon the occasion of the embarkation of the army, at Corunna, after the battle.

"THE SPEAKER then addressed Sir Samuel Hood. . . . He had afforded another instance of his good conduct at Corunna which called forth a fresh tribute of applause from the country. He had therefore to thank him in the name of the House for the wise disposition he had made of the ships and transports and the other necessary arrangements off Corunna, for facilitating the embarkation of our troops."

"SIR SAMUEL HOOD was proud that his services, to which his country had the first claim, had merited the approbation of the Honourable House; and it would be the pride as well as the study of his future life to deserve their approbation in the humble service he might have it in his power to render to his king and country."

XX.

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET SIR T.
BYAM MARTIN, G.C.B.

BY SIR RICHARD BYAM MARTIN, BART., AND ADMIRAL
SIR RICHARD VESEY HAMILTON, G.C.B.

IT has rarely happened in our Naval history that our United Kingdom has not possessed some one or two able Admirals of the first class, and a considerable number of excellent men at the top of the second class, or coming on, many of whom, if the opportunity had been afforded them, would have proved of the first class. Amongst this number may fairly be classed the subject of this paper, who was fortunate in his family interest procuring for him early promotion, and was still more fortunate in the opportunities for distinction thrown in his way, of which he availed himself to the utmost. Nelson said, "A naval officer, unlike a military, can have no fixed plans—he must be prepared for *the* chance, which may occur to-day, to-morrow, a year hence, or never." There is no better instance of this than Broke in the *Shannon*, which ship he had commanded for seven or eight years prior to his action with the *Chesapeake* in 1813, and who was so well known in the Navy for his unremitting attention to the gunnery training of his crew, that when the war broke out with the United States the following lines were written:—

"And as the war they did provoke,
We'll pay them with our cannon.
And the first to do it will be Broke,
In the gallant ship the *Shannon*."

words which proved prophetic.



T. W. Martin

ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET SIR THOMAS BYAM MARTIN. G.C.B.
VICE-ADMIRAL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

It may not be uninteresting here to remark that the *Chesapeake* was sold in 1820, and her timbers and planking used in the construction of a water-mill at Wickham, four miles from Fareham, Hants; and very lately some bullets of the action were picked out of the timber.

Byam Martin, born 1773, was the third son of Admiral Sir Henry Martin, Bart., who succeeded Sir Samuel, afterwards Lord Hood, as Commissioner of Portsmouth Dockyard in 1781, when that distinguished officer was selected as second in command to Sir G., afterwards Lord Rodney, Commander-in-Chief in the West Indies.

Sir Henry eventually became Comptroller of the Navy, a most important post, and one afterwards held for sixteen years by his son Byam, who observes in his reminiscences, written many years later, when crossing the harbour from Gosport to the dockyard on seeing a line-of-battle ship: "This was the first time my eyes ever lighted on a ship of war. I have at this moment a distinct recollection of the utter amazement with which I beheld these monsters of the deep. I was so riveted to the spot, so perfectly motionless when I got out of the carriage, so absorbed in wonder, that I should have been there the whole day if one of the boats' crew had not fetched me down." In crossing the harbour he was equally delighted and surprised when passing under the stern of the ill-fated *Royal George*, and could hardly be prevented from tumbling overboard in his excitement. The coxswain, John Allen, an old tar, said, "I see, sir, you are already determined to be a sailor." Prophetic words; living in a dockyard naturally increased the sea fever. Prince William Henry (our sailor king) was a frequent visitor at Sir Henry's house, and being 15 or 16 when first he went there, was not a favourite with Byam and his elder brother, and on one occasion they were nearly coming to fisticuffs with H.R.H., in which the allies would have sustained a signal defeat, as 8 and 10 would have been no more a match for 15 or 16 than would two 36-gun frigates have been for a 74-gun ship. After the usual smattering of an education those intended for the Navy underwent at that period, Byam

Martin, then 12½ years old, was appointed to the *Pegasus*, 32-gun frigate, which Prince William Henry commissioned in 1786. Byam Martin observed, although the Prince was "greatly pestered by noble families to take their children, he gave a preference to his old shipmates, and the sons of naval officers." In another frigate in the squadron there were so many sons of the aristocracy on board, that one of the lieutenants, when wearing ship, used to observe to those stationed at the necessary ropes: "My lords and gentlemen, shiver the mizen-topsail," which became a standing joke in the squadron. From it, however, we see their nautical education was not neglected, and in proportion to their numbers, as many excellent officers have come from their ranks as from the more democratic. The *Pegasus* was employed the greater portion of her commission in the Channel, the West Indies, and Newfoundland, all admirable stations for making thorough seamen.

Although not personally fond of H.R.H.—who was certainly very arbitrary in his conduct at times—Byam Martin writes in most grateful terms "for the practical information I picked up under H.R.H.'s command. It was his most persevering superintendence of the youngsters that obliged us always to be present if any duty was going on," from which they could derive instruction—the more to his credit when it is considered he was not 21 when he obtained his first command. Of his coming of age Martin gives an account that does not show up well for the manners and customs of the period from Royalty downwards. Except a few specially told off to remain sober, the rest were "gloriously drunk" as it was called in those days. The ship was at anchor in Placentia, the snugest of Newfoundland harbours. Lower yards and topmasts were struck, the men granted double allowance of rum, and permission to buy more from the shore—the present generation can hardly conceive the saturnalia that occurred—but mine can, having seen something of the sort on a minor scale. In one of their cruises, going from Quebec to Halifax, with a small squadron, the *Leander*, Commodore Sawyer's ship, struck heavily on a reef of rocks, and was only just saved from

sinking by getting into harbour ; in wearing round the rocks were seen under the bottom of the *Pegasus*. The officers and crew, on the return of that ship to England, were transferred to the *Andromeda*, on the 15th March, 1788, in which ship B. Martin remained till she was paid off in the following year, when he was transferred to the *Southampton*, in which vessel H.R.H. Prince Edward, afterwards the Duke of Kent, was sent to Gibraltar, and on her return Byam Martin passed his examination for lieutenant, and enjoyed a short interval of London gaiety, till called away to join the fleet commissioned in consequence of the Nootka Sound dispute with Spain in 1790, which, as is usually the case when we have a powerful Navy, was amicably settled.*

In October, 1790, Martin was promoted to lieutenant, and appointed to the *Valiant*, 74. In March, 1791, what is called the Russian armament was fitted out on account of differences between Russia and ourselves, which were also, for the same reason, settled amicably. After "but a short breathing time in London," Martin was appointed to the *Juno*, 32 guns, Captain Hood—afterwards Sir Samuel—"appointed to cruise between Portsmouth and the Start Point," and, summer or winter, "blow high, blow low," she was always cruising ; he could not have had a better school for completing his knowledge of practical seamanship. When off Guernsey, in an open roadstead, a gale of wind came on, necessitating the ship being taken out by the Russel passage, one rarely used even in fine weather—as fine a piece of seamanship as that of Captain Hayes off Ushant, so well known to readers of Naval history. For two summers the *Juno* was in attendance on the Court at Weymouth, and George III. was frequently at sea in her, which he enjoyed very much ; but it was very expensive work for Captain Hood, "who was never reimbursed the £700 expense he was put to, compelling him to borrow." At the present time, keeping up the *entente cordiale* with other nations, which ought to be defrayed by the nation, is a heavy

* Spain had laid claim to the west coast of North America, and had seized an English ship in Nootka Sound, off Vancouver Island. Pitt obtained a withdrawal of the claim and restitution of property.

tax on naval officers. Several amusing anecdotes are given of George III.'s questioning. Seeing some seagulls hovering about, the King called out to a middy, "Young gentleman, what birds are those—pigeons?" "No, your Majesty, gulls." "What?" said the King. "Gulls, gulls, where do they come from? what do they feed upon? where do they roost?" All this uttered with the greatest rapidity, and without waiting any reply to either question. The poor mid was so confounded he was ready to sink into the deck, and it was said that his life was saved by the King's attention being diverted to another subject. On another occasion the King and Queen were found by B. Martin trying to descend to the lower deck, which was always kept clear when the Royal party were on board, being uncertain whether to descend the ladder as in the case of a staircase, or stern foremost as we generally do at sea. However, under Martin's pilotage, the descent was safely accomplished; he also saved the King from a broken head, as the deck was only 5 feet 4 inches in height. Their prolonged absence occasioned some anxiety, and a search party found the King seated on a midshipman's chest, and the Queen on a half-broken chair in the midshipman's berth—Martin almost exhausted answering their numerous questions.

The *Junó* captured the first French armed ship in May, 1793, war having been declared with France, in the preceding February.

Byam Martin was promoted in May, '93, to master and commander as the rank then was styled—and appointed to the *Tisiphone* fireship, and sailed with Lord Hood's fleet to the Mediterranean, where he was employed on various services to Tunis and Tripoli, conveying troops to Toulon and raising men at Malta, till the 5th November when Lord Hood posted him to the *Modeste*, a fine 36-gun frigate, captured at Genoa. Thus before he was twenty-one he attained the step which by seniority made the highest ranks in the Naval Service attainable. His first service as a post-captain proved his fitness for it; as he had to convoy a fleet of victuallers and store-ships from Gibraltar to Bastia in Corsica, then besieged by the Navy under Lord Hood, and in the capture of which Nelson

as it is well known played so important a part.* Hearing, soon after he sailed, a French squadron had left Toulon to intercept him, he stood to the southward till he made the coast of Barbary, and then running along it to the eastward, he passed round the French fleet and got safely in to Bastia, where the stores, etc., were of the utmost importance; for this service he received warm commendation from Lord Hood. He was then sent to convoy the Mediterranean trade to England, with which he arrived safely November, 1794, when the *Modeste* was paid off at Portsmouth.

The work done in the *Modeste* although not brilliant was very important, as protection of our commerce always must be. It probably helped him to the temporary command of the *Artois* 36-gun frigate during the absence from illness of her captain Sir Edward Nagle—the *Artois* was one of the squadron of frigates under the orders of that active officer Sir Jno. Borlase Warren; while doing duty with this squadron, Martin was employed landing arms and ammunition for the Chouans in Brittany, also in the capture and destruction of the enemy's convoys. On one occasion the *Artois* nearly succeeded in bringing to action the *Nereide*, a French frigate, but was prevented by carrying away her own main top mast.

On the resumption of his command by Captain Nagle, Captain Martin was appointed to command the *Santa Margaritta*, a 36-gun frigate employed on the coast of Ireland under Admiral Sir Robert Kingsmill; and in the month of August recaptured the *Hibbert*, a rich homeward-bound West Indiaman, while employed on convoy duty as far as Teneriffe. In January, 1796, while lying in Cork Harbour, the *Hindostan*, a large transport, parted from her cables in a heavy gale, and drifting on board the *Santa Margaritta* carried away her three masts and bowsprit—fortunately no one was injured although the masts fell on board. In thirty-six hours after the accident she sailed from Cork Harbour for Plymouth with a complete set of jury† masts, top gallant sails and studding sails set—a very smart piece of work even in those days of brilliant seamanship. After his return to his station while cruising in

* See p. 299.

† Temporary masts.

company with the *Unicorn* also of 36 guns—a valuable French ship from Surinam was captured—and next morning—7th June, 1796—a French squadron consisting of a 40-gun frigate, a 36-gun frigate, and a corvette of 24 guns was discovered which endeavoured to make off. Captain Williams, the senior officer, directed Martin to chase the smaller frigate while he chased the larger one. At half-past eleven in the forenoon, the *Santa Margaritta*, going eleven knots, arrived within gunshot of the smaller frigate, but as the French Commodore had closed for mutual support, and the *Unicorn* was some distance astern, Captain Martin postponed the attack till the latter was near enough to co-operate. The enemy fired their stern guns till 1 o'clock, when the *Margaritta* commenced firing her bow guns, and the enemy yawing occasionally to bring their broadside to bear—at 2 P.M., the *Unicorn* being on the *Margaritta's* weather beam, all sail was made to close with the enemy, and a running fight maintained till 4 P.M., when the sternmost enemy's ship being unable to escape, bore up to rake the *Margaritta*, but being baffled in the attempt, gave that ship an opportunity of placing herself on the enemy's beam within pistol-shot, when a quick and well-directed fire compelled her to surrender in less than twenty minutes. The prize proved to be the *Tamise* of 36 guns with a crew of 320 men—32 of whom were killed and 19 wounded—an unusual proportion, probably owing to the close proximity of the two ships. The *Tamise*, formerly *Thames*, had been captured the previous year by three French frigates just after she had had a severe engagement with another opponent. The *Santa Margaritta* had only two killed and three wounded.

The *Unicorn* had a chase of 210 miles, and a running fight of ten hours before *La Tribune* surrendered. Captain Williams was deservedly knighted for this creditable business. The *Santa Margaritta* returned to Cork with her prize, and forty-eight hours afterwards was despatched by Admiral Kingsmill in pursuit of a Dutch frigate that had been seen on the N.W. coast of Ireland—Captain Martin found the crew had mutinied and taken the ship into Greenock and surrendered her to the English. He immediately took possession

of the frigate, which was the *Jason*, 32 guns, and carried her first to Cork and then to Plymouth. The ship was bought into the Naval service for £12,000, the whole of which, it was understood, went to the Dutch mutineers, probably some of it stopped on the way—the captors got nothing besides losing their chance of prize money. For the capture of the *Tamise* Captain Martin received the freedom of the cities of Dublin and Cork. His next cruise was in “the stream of the Scilly Islands”—and he had scarcely arrived on his station, when he captured a privateer of 20 guns and 150 men, and another of 18 guns and 136 men, retaking a valuable capture, with which he went to Plymouth. About Christmas, 1796, he was appointed to the *Tamar*, a new fir-built frigate of 38 guns, and was sent to convoy the trade to the Leeward Islands. After joining the fleet under Admiral Harvey, he was sent with a small squadron to ascertain the best place to land the troops under Sir R. Abercrombie, destined to attack Puerto Rico—the capture of which island would have been very useful for the protection of our commerce, as it then furnished a very convenient shelter to hostile privateers. The attack indeed failed, but the *Tamar* was actively engaged with some of the batteries, and Captain Martin’s services were appreciated and warmly acknowledged by the Admiral and General.

The *Tamar* was then employed cruising for the protection of trade for seven months, during which time five French privateers, mounting in all 68 guns, and having crews numbering 380, were captured—and four smaller ones were also taken—besides a Spanish schooner and three merchant vessels recaptured. Captain Martin had been presented with plate to the value of £100 by Lloyd’s committee while on the Cork station, and upon quitting the Leeward station, was for his valuable services in protecting trade, presented by the merchants of the Island of Martinique with a sword worth £100, and the same by those of Barbadoes, also a service of plate of the same value from the Island of Antigua, flattering letters accompanying each present—expressive of the sense entertained by the Mercantile Committees of the services he

had rendered to their trade. In consequence of impaired health, he exchanged into the *Dictator* of 64 guns, and sailed for England with a convoy—with which, after a dangerous passage owing to winter gales and the unseaworthy condition of the ship compelling him to throw seventeen guns overboard to prevent the ship from foundering, he eventually reached England with most of the convoy. In the same ship he took a regiment to Jersey, and returned to England with the relieved regiment. In August, 1798, he was appointed to the *Fisgard*, a new 38-gun frigate then fitting out at Plymouth, and in October joined the Channel fleet under the command of Lord Bridport, cruising off Brest, and on the 20th of that month, had another piece of good fortune in falling in with the *Immortalité*, a fine French frigate, which after an hour's chase he brought to action—after twenty-five minutes' combat, the *Fisgard* was unmanageable, having had all her braces, bowlines, and most of her running rigging cut to pieces, when the enemy endeavoured to make off, but by the activity of the officers and ship's company, sail was soon made again, and her opponent overtaken, who, after another action of nearly two hours' duration, struck her colours, and when taken possession of was found to be one of the largest of French frigates mounting twenty-eight 24-pounders on the main deck, with, including soldiers, 550 men on board, 52 of whom were killed and 61 wounded—the *Fisgard* having 36 killed and wounded; her main-deck armament being only 18-pounders, this was a very creditable action for the *Fisgard*. After landing the prisoners at Portsmouth, B. Martin found an account of the action by a French Lieutenant, showing his opinion of the bad manœuvring of the *Fisgard*, and that she ought to have been captured. B. Martin pithily remarks—"the proof of the pudding is in the eating." For this victory Captain Martin received very great credit, Carden the first lieutenant being promoted, who afterwards became memorable for the gallant defence he made in the *Macedonian* against the United States frigate, *United States*, of superior force. The *Fisgard* was very actively employed in the Channel, capturing many French privateers and recapturing several English

merchant vessels—also in reconnoitering Brest. The *Fisgard* was also engaged in several cutting-out expeditions off the coast of France and Spain—but one of the most admirably managed was entirely the conception of Byam Martin, who first proposed it to the then senior officer Sir Richard Keats, one of our best officers, in that period of good officers, who, however, rejected it as too hazardous, but shortly after left the command, leaving Martin senior officer, who carried it out to a most successful issue that very evening.

Corunna and Ferrol had been blockaded by us for four or five years, but nothing further had been attempted; calculating on the Spaniards being in a state of false security, B. Martin arranged his plans for cutting out from the harbour of Corunna an armed ship of 20 guns and several merchant vessels. The plan of attack was communicated to all the captains, and Martin requested them to communicate it to their officers and make them sensible of the necessity of strict silence. Every one was requested to ask for any information he might need, and every detail was so fully explained as to make him quite easy as to the thorough understanding of the plan. It was customary for the blockading squadron to stand close in to Corunna just before dark and then tack and stand off for the night. The boats of the squadron were to come to the *Fisgard* just at dusk—the frigates they belonged to tacking as usual after they had left.

The First Lieutenant, Pipon, was placed in command of the boats, and had with him a man who spoke Spanish, and well tutored in the reply he was to give to the sentry at the head of the pier, or guard boat, when challenged. It was the main feature to anchor the *Fisgard* at the back of the lighthouse, a work of difficulty, and the darkness which concealed the boat's movements, also rendered it difficult to estimate the distance from the breakers; all the officers in the boats were made aware of the *Fisgard's* intended position and where to find her in the event of adverse occurrences, also its object, which was to open a tremendous fire to draw the troops to the point they would consider attacked, but the fire was not to be opened till the first musket was heard from the boats

which would make known they were discovered. The boats, seventeen in number, were made fast to one another, and were not to separate till fairly in the harbour. Every light on board the *Fisgard* was put out, but not so those of the ships in the offing. The shot were carefully drawn from the guns *—Martin being as careful not needlessly to kill an enemy as he was cautious in not hazarding without cause the lives of his own men. By good fortune the ship was anchored in the spot intended, the anchor having been previously cockbilled† and eased down to the water's edge so as to avoid a splash. Perfect silence was maintained, since even a loud whisper might have almost been heard on shore. As soon as the musket from the boats was heard, the harmless broadsides of the ship were fired and continued in rapid succession until the work had been accomplished. The first fire set the drums of the garrison at work and our broadsides soon made the natives aware of our attack, and the garrison, attracted by the heavy fire, gave their attention to it, leaving the boats to do their work in peace. Our men brought out two ships, another vessel and two gunboats—one of the ships was quite new, and equipped for a voyage to South America, and pierced for 20 guns. Had this affair taken place the night before, all the ladies of the place and neighbourhood would have been captured, as there was a ball and supper on board the new ship; Martin remarks, "I was, however, very glad such living treasures did not fall to our lot." The whole service was completed without injury to a man engaged in it, nor to the Spaniards as far as loss of life was concerned. It was an affair worthy of Dundonald, and carried out as all his attacks were by weighing carefully beforehand all the risks and preparing for them, and then executing the enterprise with dash, energy, and prudence combined.

In October, 1801, the *Fisgard* was paid off at the Peace of Amiens, and Martin enjoyed the comforts of home till May, 1803, when upon the resumption of hostilities, he was appointed to the *Impetueux*, 78 guns.

* Guns in war time were always kept loaded with shot.

† Hanging from the cathead only.

The *Impetueux* joined the Channel squadron under Admiral Cornwallis, and after a brief period under Collingwood in the inshore squadron, joined the Ferrol squadron under Sir Edward Pellew. While there the ship was worked into Vares Bay near Cape Ortegal, with the wind blowing strong out, and was the first line-of-battle ship that had ever done it, and after delivering provision to a frigate inside, rejoined the squadron.

On the way from Plymouth to rejoin the Brest squadron, Christmas Day, 1803, the *Impetueux* was overtaken by a tremendous gale in which she nearly foundered, eleven ports on the main and two on the quarter deck were stove in, and several persons nearly drowned. The lower deck had to be scuttled to get rid of the accumulated water, the vessel being nearly water-logged, and the head of the mizzen-mast twisted round. Fortunately they succeeded in getting the ship before the wind, and thanks to a moonlight night were enabled to cast anchor in Cawsand Bay at 11 P.M. This is a specimen of the many happy Christmases spent at sea, and which doubtless gave rise to Marryat's song on the subject in "Snarley Yow."

In the following March, 1804, the *Magnificent*, 74, was wrecked near the Black Rocks off Brest, and within two hours had totally disappeared, but as the squadron was near all hands were saved. Owing however to the strength of wind and tide 84 officers and men were taken prisoners, their boats having been drifted ashore. In the rescue the *Impetueux* had a prominent part. On the 22nd August, the French fleet of 22 sail of the line came out of Brest. Admiral Cornwallis made every effort to bring it to a close action, and followed it up so closely into Brest that some men on board our fleet were killed by the fire from the battery. The *Impetueux* was generally employed in the inshore squadron. In 1807, by the Treaty of Tilsit, Russia had become the ally of France, and other powers were to be forced into the alliance. Accordingly in that year B. Martin was appointed to the *Prince of Wales*, a 98-gun ship, for a short period, having been superseded in the command, the ship being required to hoist the flag of Admiral (afterwards Lord) Gambier,

appointed Commander-in-chief to the naval forces in the combined naval and military expedition to Copenhagen in 1807, to seize the Danish fleet, which, from undoubted information the Government had obtained of the secret articles of the Treaty, was to have joined France, and to form the right wing of Napoleon's invasion scheme. Martin was much disgusted at being superseded in the command of a ship about to proceed on a warlike expedition, more especially as it was done to allow his junior officer, Sir Henry Popham, to be appointed to the responsible post of Captain of the Fleet—which also gave great disgust to those very gallant officers, Hood, Keats, and Stopford, and others—his seniors in the fleet. In January, 1808, Martin was appointed to the *Implacable*, of 74 guns, late the *Du Guay Trouin*, captured by Sir Richard Strachan, when fleeing from the defeat of Trafalgar—in which ship he proceeded to the Baltic, Sir James Saumarez being the Commander-in-chief, Sir S. Hood and Sir R. Keats, junior admirals. The *Implacable* was very actively employed during 1808–9 in that sea.* On the 20th August, 1808, in company with the *Centaur*, 74, bearing the flag of Sir S. Hood, the Swedish fleet was joined in Oro Roads not far from Hango Head, off which the Russian fleet of 2 three-deckers, and 7 two-deckers, besides frigates, etc., were at anchor. The Swedish fleet consisted of 8 two-decked ships, and 4 frigates, wretchedly manned, by conscripts mostly, the conquest of Finland by Russia having deprived them of their best seamen—and even worse supplied by the disorganised civil service with provisions, stores, etc. One of the many proofs that armies and navies without an efficient civil service, are almost helpless.

The allied fleet weighed on the 25th in pursuit of the Russian fleet, seen indistinctly to windward from the deck. The English ships being coppered, gained fast on both fleets, and at 4 A.M. of the 26th the *Implacable* brought the Russian leewardmost ship, a 74, to action. After some little manœuvring, the *Implacable* passed “a few feet from the quarter of the enemy, when a broadside with three shot in every gun was

* For the following events see also pp. 365, 366.

poured into her with tremendous effect. The Russian had her ensign twice shot away, and after the last time, when it was probably hauled down, the pendant was lowered in token of surrender."

The whole Russian fleet had borne up, and were coming down before the wind to save their beaten friend, and a three-decker was not far off. The *Centaur* being two miles to leeward—too far off to afford any support—made the "general recall," and Martin was compelled to quit his beaten foe. The body of the Swedish fleet were at this time 10 miles to leeward. On closing, the *Implacable* was received with three cheers by the *Centaur*—a well-deserved honour. Fortunately for the Russians, the wind shifted, and enabled them to fetch into port Baltic—an anchorage 30 miles to the west of Reval—excepting the disabled ship, which had to anchor outside; boats were sent to tow her into the harbour. Observing this, Sir Samuel Hood ran on board of the *Sevolod*, the Russian ship, and while boarding her both ships ran ashore, and the *Implacable* having anchored only half a cable from her, hove the *Centaur* off. While all this was going on, the Russian fleet had got under sail, and was steering down on them. Notwithstanding which the crew was taken out of the *Sevolod*; she was then set on fire, and ultimately blew up. "The Swedish fleet anchored near us next day." In the Swedish *Gazette*, describing the affair, it states, "The conduct of the English Admiral and his two captains surpasses everything my pen is able to write. A few examples, perhaps, are to be found in English naval history of such a brave and intrepid enterprise as for two ships to engage a fleet of nine sail of the line and twelve frigates at such a distance from and without assistance from the rest of their own fleet, and at last, in 20 minutes, to take and destroy a ship of 74 guns." The Order of the Sword of Sweden was conferred on the Admiral and Captains. I doubt if half a dozen officers in the Baltic fleet of 1854-5, although the fleet was frequently in sight of Port Baltic, were aware of this action, so little did naval officers then know of our glorious naval victories.

This year is memorable for the release of the greater

portion of the Spanish army serving under Napoleon, by Sir R. Keats, in the Islands of the Sound and Belt. Nothing very stirring occurred for the rest of the year. In May, 1809, the *Implacable* was again employed most usefully and actively in the Baltic, harassing the enemy's communication along the coast, and having several sharp boat actions ; but as the Russian ships carefully kept in harbour, no opportunity offered of another action. In the following year, his health having suffered, B. Martin was appointed to the command of one of the Royal Yachts, where he remained till advanced to the Flag rank on the 1st August, 1811, in which year Russia had definitely broken with Napoleon. In May, 1812, he hoisted his flag in the *Akbar*, 74, and proceeded to join Sir J. Saumarez in the Baltic, where he was very actively employed in co-operating with the Russians in the defence of Riga, by equipping a flotilla of boats which were of inestimable value to the army acting on the river Duna and its vicinity ; also in taking a force of Russian troops to produce an impression in Dantzic and its vicinity that a force was to be landed in rear of Napoleon's armies advancing on Moscow and St. Petersburg, *viâ* Riga, the siege of the latter being effectually stopped by his naval demonstration, as he was informed by the Emperor of Russia, who also presented him with a snuff-box set in diamonds for services rendered to Russia.

In 1813, B. Martin was second in command at Plymouth, and in the autumn was sent on a mission to the Duke of Wellington, relative to naval co-operation in his latter campaigns in Spain and France, 1813-14.

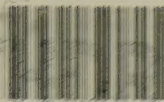
In 1814, after Napoleon's abdication, he was appointed as chief of the English commission to arrange, in concert with the Dutch and French Commissioners, the distribution of the men-of-war and Naval stores at Antwerp. In 1815, on Napoleon's return from Elba, he was appointed to command a small squadron to co-operate with the army in Belgium. Shortly after his return to Plymouth, his flag was hauled down, and his active service at sea terminated. Every one will certainly agree that Martin's career was a very distinguished

one. He was favoured by interest in getting promotion at an early age, and still more by the numerous chances that fell to his lot, but in every situation he was placed in, whether against the enemy, co-operating with foreigners, or with our own army, he rose to the occasion. From January, 1815 to 1832, he served as, first Deputy, and then Comptroller of the Navy—in which time the fleet for Algiers was fitted out—and at his suggestion to Lord Exmouth, “after-bitts” were fitted for the first time (notwithstanding the Nile and Copenhagen) for anchoring by the stern which was most useful in the action. He was offered the command in the Mediterranean in 1832, and again some years later, but he declined. Became an Admiral of the Fleet—having also been Vice-admiral of the United Kingdom—and died in 1854. In 1853, when Her Majesty was inspecting the Channel Fleet, she invited him to accompany her; his son, the late Sir William Byam Martin, having his flag flying at Spithead, and his second son Henry being in command of the *Duke of Wellington*, the finest three-decker in the Navy.

THE END.

1870

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